

LOVED BOOKS
THAT LIFT THE
SOUL
WITH WINGS



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MARY GARTON FOSTER

To the best of friends & a lover¹²⁵⁹
of all good & noble thoughts
Mrs M. Gartin Foster.

from W. H. Kirkpatrick
'London Town'

Oct. 19. 09

"Where'er I go, whatever realms I see"
my heart, untravelling, fondly turns to thee

Gerald & Albert
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IRISH AND ENGLISH

IRISH & ENGLISH

PORTRAITS AND IMPRESSIONS

BY

ROBERT LYND

London

FRANCIS GRIFFITHS

34 Maiden Lane Strand W.C.

1908

TO
SYLVIA DRYHURST

PREFACE

I HAVE been warned that my title is a bad one, I have been told that it is not descriptive of the contents of the book, and—a consideration that I do not pretend to despise—that it does not even possess any catchpenny virtue. As to the former charge, I do not mean the title to be more than loosely descriptive of the portraits, impressions, essays, sketches, or whatever you like to call them, that follow. My purpose in choosing it was merely to indicate that a part of the book is concerned with people and things seen in Ireland, and another part with people and things seen in England.

It is necessary, I think, to make this clear, especially, in regard to the Irish sketches. I have not attempted in these sketches to present a series of typical Irish figures, but have written largely about unusual and out-of-the-way people. Such an explanation would be superfluous and absurd were I writing about any other country than Ireland. It is still a matter of faith in many places, however, that an Irishman is “typically Irish” in exact proportion as he is eccentric and ridiculous. When an Englishman calls you a typical Irishman, it is only his way of telling you that you are an agreeable sort of fool. He is as firmly assured of

the Irishman's insanity as Polonius was of the insanity of Hamlet. Even the very newest English writer about Ireland—an overflowing gentleman who exhorts his country-men to approach Ireland with tears of repentance in their eyes and smiles of love on their faces, and charges eighteen shillings a volume for his advice—describes the Irishman as an irresponsible dreamer, an inexhaustible liar, a person who borrows your money and never pays you back, and whom, apparently, you are to love none the less on that account, because in certain far-off contingencies he would share his last crust with you. What I especially like about Englishmen is that, after they have called you a thief and a liar and have patted you on the back for being so charming in spite of it, they look honestly depressed if you fail to see that they have been paying you a handsome compliment.

It is all very absurd. Who first invented the Englishman's Irishman I have no idea. Englishmen's Irishmen are undoubtedly to be found in public-houses in the Strand and Holborn, and occasionally on jaunting-cars in Ireland. I question, however, whether people of this sort existed before the Englishman or the anti-Irish Irishman invented them. The man who cadges for tips and free drinks in a rich "irresistible" brogue is not, in all probability, the original model from which the stage Irishman was drawn, but is himself simply an ambitious understudy of the stage Irishman.

"Punch" has had a good deal to do with settling the stage Irishman's appearance, accent, and behaviour, and "Punch" has consistently hated Ireland. A friend of mine had occasion recently to look through a whole series of volumes of this typically English journal, and he told me that Ireland and Irishmen were the only subjects, so far as he could see, which the comic writers and artists of England have shown themselves practically unable to touch without becoming guilty of the most astonishing malevolence and bad taste.

This, however, is becoming something of a homily, and, besides that, it is nearly, if not quite, irrelevant. Still, I thought it would be as well to warn people against drawing foolish conclusions from anything I have written in this book.

One word more. I wish it to be clearly understood that I refuse to be held responsible for the moral tone of the English sketches and essays.

ROBERT LYND.

Hampstead, December, 1907.

P.S.—I have read my preface over in proof, and I have since been wondering why I wrote it. Probably I only wanted an excuse for airing my opinions. That my opinions are worth airing I suppose I believe: otherwise I should cease to hold them. Still, other people may not share my prejudices on this point. Most of them having

utilitarian minds will look for relevancy even in a preface.

Perhaps, I may give at least an appearance of relevancy to the present preface, if I mention the fact that all the matter that follows has already appeared in different weekly journals. The greater part of it was written in haste to catch late posts and under various damaging conditions that have left abundant traces behind them. I decided it would be foolish to cut out the topical allusions from the descriptive sketches, and so I have not troubled to delete a good many "last weeks," "the other days," and so forth, which will irritate some readers and be accepted by others in an obliging and common-sense spirit.

Let me add, before closing, that in all probability very few of these sketches would ever have been written, had it not been for the generous and patient friendship of Frank Rutter and Ladbroke Black.

R.L.

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IRISH

On an Emigrant Train.

I HAPPENED one day to be passing through the southern part of the county of Derry at a time when all the country except the railway stations seemed to be idle. Every station at which we arrived was busy enough—even vehemently busy. Little crowds had gathered on the platforms, anxious-faced, lugubrious, silent, like the people in a house where a dead body lies. Farmers with huge, grotesque limbs; their wives dismally respectable in their unaccustomed cloaks and gloves and bonnets; labourers, rough of moustache, sturdy, brown-faced, some of whom had shaved and put on collars for the occasion; old men with pinched faces, ridiculously stooped, incessantly brushing the drip from their noses with great red handkerchiefs; children, some standing in rags in the background, others who were better dressed pressing forward with large, wondering eyes, and thrusting their hands into the hands of tall and trustworthy people; all these and other types of a countless variety gave to the little way-

side stations as melancholy an aspect as I have ever beheld. Had the stations been decked out in crape and white, heavy-scented lilies, with long-faced mutes standing about like sentinels, the effect would scarcely have been as mournful. Here one seemed to be assisting at the funeral of a nation, to be the spectator for the moment of a funeral procession that never ends. Myself, I would gladly have turned my back on all the embracing, the weeping, the bestowing of the foolish little parcels and the foolish bits of advice with which women embarrass a man on his departure into the world. One is apt to lose one's appetite for life, one's fastidious appreciation of the lights and shades of the eternal comedy, in a scene of so universal lamentation. On such an occasion one's eyes are shut to everything except a throng of wet faces—round O's of anguish—afraid to look at each other, shifting-eyed and ashamed, horribly dappled with tears.

The compartment of the train in which I travelled was soon filled. There seemed to be only one joyful man in it. In a corner opposite him sat a young man and woman, who leaned towards each other, clasping hands. Evidently the young man was accompanying to the quay the girl whom his narrow means would not allow him to marry. From time to time their eyes met, and then fell again. Neither of them was beautiful, except

with the beauty a passionate sorrow gives; and neither of them was eloquent, for scarcely a word passed between them. Sometimes the man would pluck up courage, as we steamed into a station, and remark, with an attempt at off-handedness, that a lot of people seemed to be travelling by the train. Looking into her eyes, however, his eyes would fall again, and their breasts would come a little nearer. The girl never answered that I could make out, even though the man, remembering his manhood, brought the same sentence more than once out of his grief-addled brain. On the opposite side of the carriage, another girl—awkward, misshapen, thin-faced—sat with lowered head and wept silently. A great boile of a fellow near her looked out of the window all the time, shifting violently in his seat as the force of some memory seemed to strike him. Everybody in the carriage was young—young and in tears. Everybody, that is, except the joyful young man whom I have mentioned. Dressed in a long, comfortable coat and a bowler hat, he sat by a window, swinging one of his feet and humming a tune to himself. Apparently, though he himself could afford to stay in Ireland, he was intensely interested in all those who were turning so reluctantly from her nakedness. Everyone who came in he surveyed with a rapid, inquisitive look, and in each of them he seemed to discover a fresh puzzle. He was tall and

spare, with a flush on his cheeks; and his eyes were alive, as though he were nursing some secret rapture. Sometimes he smiled to himself, till I thought he must have been kissing a girl and been kissed back again. He was almost officiously polite in the readiness with which he withdrew his legs to let any newcomers pass him, but he paid himself for his politeness by allowing himself to whistle, in a happy, subdued way, up into their faces. A careless bird of a fellow, I thought—a heartless kind of bird, too, in the circumstances. I strained my ears to catch the tunes he was at, for I never could bear to hear a tune and not be able to put a name on it. Having looked on the man as a likely frequenter of music-halls, I was astonished to discover that he was going over snatches of hymn-tunes to himself.

As the train was about to leave one of the stations, the door of our compartment was flung open amid a great uproar of porters and onlookers. A basket was thrown in on the floor, and an old woman in a shawl scrambled after it. I caught hold of the basket—a monstrous, unseemly thing stinking with fish—and helped the woman, who was all gasps and mutterings, into the carriage. She sat down beside me, and began thanking me volubly. Stained with snuff, hale, knotty-faced, quick-eyed, she passed from her gratitude to the fresher stuff of conversation. She bubbled over especially with the

story of a man who had recently been killed on the line. He had, it seemed, been knocked down by a train at a level crossing, and death had, in the newspaper phrase, been instantaneous. Crouching out of the far corner, his ears alert as the ears of a fox, the cheerful man broke in on her suddenly. 'Ah, madam,' he cried, 'it's a grand thing to be ready!' 'Ready?' she asked, with a snort and a quick glance at him; 'ready?' 'Ay,' said he, bending forward, and smiling with all his might, 'no matter when death comes, to be only ready.' 'Heth and troth,' she observed, with a wise chuckle, 'I don't know what you mean. One's just as ready as another.' The man's face lit up with the flame of religious belief. Running his eyes from one of his neighbours to the other, embracing them all in his joyful smile, he began to quote verses of Scripture, to murmur holy names, to rub in, as it were, the one plan of salvation. He gazed at the lovers, as at a bed in which his words might take root. But they were looking into each other's wet faces, and their breasts were closer than before. He glanced at the great oak-stem of a man. But he still sat with the restlessness of a man in torture, and, as he stared out of the window, his eyes seemed to me to be troubled with the vision of a naked, filthy cottage built among the stones of a hillside. The evangelist turned hopefully to the

girl with the drooping head. But she was sitting, a cold, lonely thing, her shoulders stooped and her eyes hidden, crying down endless tears. Having made the compass of the carriage, he returned to the old woman in the shawl with undefeated enthusiasm. He spoke in a loud, eloquent voice, however, that showed us that we were all included in his audience. He exhorted the old woman to make her calling and election sure, and comforted her with many passages from the sacred writings. She twisted up her nose, and interrupted him suddenly. 'Where under God,' she asked, 'did you get all that out of?' He spread out his hands in a bounteous gesture. 'In the Bible,' he said, 'every word of it.' She paused reflectively. 'Ay,' she agreed, 'I thought as much.' 'Yes,' he said earnestly, as though pressing a lesson home; 'in God's holy book.' She snuffed and shook an arm free of her shawl. 'Do you tell me that?' she said. He bent forward, and with a livelier flush set out into a tolerably long sermon. She listened patiently to him, with her hands folded. When he came to an end, she asked him: 'Are you done yet?' He laughed in a gay, surprised way. 'I am,' he said. 'Ay,' said she, 'and will you tell me this now? Who was it wrote the Bible?' He gave her the answer one might have expected. 'Man,' she cried, after a pause, looking him up and down in a motherly

way, 'you're wonderfully ignorant. That beats all,' she said, 'how a sensible-looking young man, the like of you, can sit there, and come out with anything so foolish.' If he wanted to know who it was that wrote the Bible, she assured him, she could tell him. The Bible that he had read—and that she had read—wasn't the Bible at all. The real Bible was written in a foreign language, and nobody but scholars knew what was in it. The clergy had pretended to translate it, but they had translated only those parts that suited them, and had put in a good many things that weren't in the original Bible at all. It was a winning theory—heaven knows where she can have picked it up—and I could not help smiling to myself as I watched surprise and awe and indignation and the ecstasy of faith pass and re-pass, like shadow and sunlight, across the young man's face. The woman freed her arms energetically from her shawl again as she worked up to her contemptuous peroration. "God's holy book," quo' he! "The clergy's book," says I. A heap of lies, I'm telling you. Young man,' she said, 'I hope you'll have more sense by the time you've got some hair on your face.' This was her parting shot. She stooped down and gathered her basket on her arm. The train pulled up at a station immediately afterwards, and she bustled out, a droll figure, with the

young man smiling tolerantly and shouting, 'God bless you, ma'am,' repeatedly—and, I am sure, irritatingly—after her.

Listlessly, the lovers looked up at him; listlessly, the girl with the bent head raised her eyes; listlessly, the great trunk of a man turned from the window, and stared at the exhilarated evangelist. Suddenly the fellow fixed his attention on me, and I contradicted everything he said in a cold way, for I was angry that he should be obtruding his little self upon a sorrow that must have craved above all things for silence—a sorrow that to any healthy-minded man would have been a sacred thing. He came over suddenly, and filled the seat beside me that the old atheist had left vacant. 'Man,' he said in a low voice, with his mouth close to my ear, 'I know you don't believe a word you're saying. You know yourself you don't. I just want a chance to speak to all these people,'—he waved his arm round the carriage—'and to tell them the truth. They're ripe,' he said, 'ripe for the plucking. Oh, if you're not a Christian you don't understand, you can't understand, what it means to get in a word in season. Don't spoil my chance,' he pleaded. 'You don't know what harm that woman may have done already.' I almost pitied him. I felt that his joy was only a thing assumed—and assumed courageously—and that he, too, in

his heart, knew something of an exile's sorrow. Still, as I looked round the carriage, I seemed to be looking upon a woe and desolation of spirit that were beyond all other woe and desolation. So, for the sake of everybody, I engaged the fellow in a series of arguments on small theological points, and the others were able to endure their loneliness alone. 'God is love,' said my friend, confidently. Every face around us, save his and my own, was dark with anguish, wild as a hunted animal's with despair. 'God,' I agreed, 'is love, but'

The Child in the Fields.

ON the farm at which I was a guest in the sunniest years of my life, one of the labourers was a child, strawy-haired and freckled, who showed a set of little crippled brown teeth when he smiled. A tiny, hard-fleshed fellow, radiantly active upon the work of the farm, he liked nothing better than to shuffle to and fro about the heels of the horses, weighted with a pair of huge boots that could scarcely be kept on his feet for all their cord lacings, and that clattered with a tremendous noise on the stones.

Perhaps our friendship had its roots in the habit I early acquired of carrying tobacco in my pockets. I had no ambition to lead the child astray—indeed, I was no more than a child myself at the time—but the appeal in his sky-coloured eyes, as he paused in his work and watched the clouds coming from my lips was often too strong for me. I took the pipe out of my mouth, and reached it to him. Throwing himself at his ease on a pile of hay, he would gather the stem in his lips with an unnaturally determined air and would puff at it,

his eyes wide and serious, with rapid loud smackings, until he had sent up a Jacob's-ladder of smoke between himself and the roof of the stable. He was generally a little white and giddy when he restored the pipe to me. 'Man,' he would sigh, in a deep, long breath, beaming through his whiteness, 'that town tobacco's grand!' I protested it was the same that his father smoked; for when I was a boy and had a heart for adventure I liked to be seen cutting my tobacco from a bar of plug or twist, and rubbing it with a veteran's solemnity in my palm. Besides, I was poor and could not easily afford cut-and-dried tobacco.

Bob, however—for that was the child's name—would never believe me. Every summer I came hither from the town, and sprawled about the place in idleness, like a man of fortune, and he inferred that so useless a person as myself must necessarily be rich, and that all that I bought must be of the best and costliest. As I stood beside him at his work, he often found my example infectious, and ceased from his ploughing at the end of a furrow for a draw of tobacco and a discussion on men and manners. 'Man dear,' he would say, fixing his eyes greedily on my pipe, 'd' youse never get tired bein' a gentleman?' I asked him what he meant by being a gentleman. 'Oh, never doin' nothin', an' that!' he replied vaguely, with a hitch of his shoulders. 'That's what a gentleman means.' I

assured him that I was of the same breed as the farmer and the sons of the farmer. 'Naw,' he insisted, shaking his head, 'they can all give a hand at liftin' the flax and bindin' the corn, but youse jist sit there an' smoke an' smoke.' I swore that the dearest hope of my life was to be a farmer, and have fields and cattle of my own. He laughed scornfully at the notion. 'G' 'long,' he said, 'youse cud'n' drive a plough straight!' I was certain I could, and said so. 'Here,' he cried, making way for me at the plough-handles, 'take a houl't of it. Go on, horse!' And running up to the animal, he thundered little blows on its rump. Before I knew where I was the plough was cutting destructive semi-circles among the roots of the turnips and heeling over like an ill-ballasted ship in a storm. Lustily shouting 'Whoa, whoa!' to the horse, Bob ran up anxiously and thrust me from the plough. Then, when he had restored it to its proper balance, he suddenly realised the fun of the situation and marched off along the furrow, laughing in great childish bursts.

Unhappily, he was tongue-tied, and this made him strange and lonely among his brothers. He did not speak his words as I have written them down. Indeed, he spoke more like an infant learning to stammer its first syllables. So serious was this affection of his tongue that his parents did not think it worth while to send him to school, and

he was able neither to read nor write. Consequently, he was very simple-minded, and given to thinking for himself. I do not know what can have set his thoughts on religion, but I remember the warped little figure slouching through the fields, with his toes turned in, and declaring stoutly that heaven and hell were clergymen's fables. 'Me b'lieves,' he said, putting out his words slowly in his queer dialect, ' 'at whun a man's deed, he's deed, an' no more 'bout him.'

In some instances, his refusal to bow before the mysteries seems to have inspired him to a sort of courage. In the windy part of the country in which he lived, there are many men and women who are uncertain whether God likes to see them going to the circus. They go, however, and enjoy the show all the more from a sense of the grave risks they are running in doing so. One night, Bob set out with a host of his neighbours for a circus that had pitched its tents in a town some three miles off. In the minds of some of them it was no more sinful to look upon a naked woman than to look at a woman dressed in tights. Unhappily, just as a young woman in tights was leaping through paper hoops from the back of a horse at full gallop, a thunder-peal broke out over the canvas tent, and the din of the rain on the roof was like the din of a besieged town under artillery fire. 'It's a judg-

ment,' exclaimed some, and, jumping to their feet, they made for the door. Bob did not move, however, for all the flight of his neighbours. So long as life remained in him, he was determined to drink the full cup of its joys. So he sat on, and saw a man swallowing swords and heard comic songs and many other things that his religious neighbours missed. Ploughing his way home afterwards amid the storm of lightning, he came upon a man he knew, kneeling in a pool of water in the middle of the road, sobbing and sending up lusty prayers for salvation. Bob saw the fellow—a huge, knotty-limbed Presbyterian—in a sudden flash, and observed the tears mixing with the rain on his terror-stricken face. 'Hi!' he said, going up to him and shaking him roughly; 'are youse drunk?' And he insisted on leading the man home, a midge toddling beside an elephant, and comforted him by assuring him that there was no God, and that, even if he were struck dead, he was in no danger of being called up on the Day of Judgment.

At the same time, I must confess that Bob's own creed was strangely inconsistent and variable. One day, as he was chewing tobacco at the side of a flax-dam, he admitted to me, for instance, that he would not mind trapping or killing any bird except the robin, but the robin was God's bird, and no man or child could injure it with impunity. He was

capable, too, of great fears. He told me how, sometimes, when he was climbing the hill to his home at night, he felt as though a terrible shape were pursuing him and reaching out of the darkness after him with long, clutching arms. Indeed, it was a common thing for him to run all the way up the hill like a mad thing, and to arrive before his father's hearth shaking, the hair sticking to his forehead with sweat. There were mysterious portents in the countryside, moreover. On the night of his grandmother's death, he and his mother had been crouched over the fire in their cottage when the door was suddenly shaken and the latch lifted, and the opened door let nothing in but a queer, cold wind. 'It's the death-rap!' said his mother, catching him by the arm in her fear; 'your granny must be dead.' The old woman had been ailing for some time past, however, so that this prophetic business need not unduly astonish us.

Bob's beliefs became more Christian as he grew older, and felt the natural ambition to become an Orangeman. He accepted the God of his fathers along with the drums and the masonic symbols and the sashes and the other regalia of the order. He had himself no more objection to the Pope of Rome than a bird in the fields has, but he wanted to wear a coloured sash on the Twelfth of July, and he liked the music. He took on a

manlier air after his initiation, and began to curse the horses in a deeper and more self-confident voice. Finally, he fell in love with a girl who went to church on Sundays. He bought a rough homespun suit and a pair of boots that fitted him, and followed her. From that time onward he went about with a clean face, and became a convinced believer in immortality.

A Man and Some Chickens

JOHN was the most unnecessary man I have ever known. The wages he received on the farm were in the nature of a charity rather than an industrial speculation. You had only to look at him to see how incompetent he was. You saw it in his foolish, smiling, unwashed face. You saw it in his limbs as they twisted this way and that, grotesque in their pattern almost as a bolt of forked lightning. He was of a figure inclining to bigness: a dark man, with deep dark eyes, that were full of sudden lights, like the eyes of an animal. I never knew a man so ragged or one shaped so oddly. On his shoulders hung a coat, rusted and tinged under the stress of years of weather, showing loose ends of thread where buttons once had been. He wore no collar, and the waistcoat that half covered his chest was a thing of tatters--of loops and windows through which one obtained a sight of a stained shirt and a pair of sadly inefficient suspenders. His trousers were of a green corduroy, hardened here and there

into grease-spots and as tattered as his waistcoat. Sometimes, indeed, as he sat chopping wood in the coal-shed, with a tree-stump for throne and his knees widened, you had to look away hurriedly in order to escape a too intimate and embarrassing view of his limbs in their primal nakedness.

A superfluous man, John nevertheless went about the country cheerfully enough. As he walked, or rather progressed—for he walked only in the sense in which a crab can be said to walk—along the middle of the road, I was never able to detect him in any hang-dog or troubled attitude. He was one of nature's grotesques, and was childishly unconscious of the part he filled. His face in itself was a caricature, a baboonish affair, and the effect of baboonishness was heightened by his rounded shoulders and by the distended way he had of opening his mouth when he was laughing. Polyphemus must have laughed in something of the same manner. For when John laughed, he spread open a mouth like a great sea cave through which all the winds and the noises that wander about the world seemed to shriek and bellow. His teeth were huge as an animal's, and yellow as only a human being's are; at the end of a fit of laughter, they snapped suddenly, and his head, a narrow-topped affair, ceased to lie back from his body, and settled, square and alert, on his shoulders again. Hobbling along, with the aid of

a stick cut from a hedge, he uttered from time to time inarticulate grunts, echoes of laughter of which he had not yet succeeded in disburdening himself.

Continually, he paused for a look over a gate, like a man who had plenty of time to lose. If a cart met him on the road, he greeted the driver of it from afar with a shout about the condition of the day. He stood still and leaned on his stick while it went by, roaring out his share of small-talk. Then, when it had passed him, he turned and gazed after it, still bellowing and guffawing out of his emptiness, until it had crept round a corner, or had gone, an indistinct, beetle-like thing, beyond the range of his lungs.

I never could make out why he should put himself to such pains, for during all the years I knew him he said nothing of sense or import. Contentedly, he met you on the road, his eyelids rising suddenly like window blinds. 'Morrow, boy!' said he, the common style of greeting in north-east Ulster. 'Morrow, John!' you would answer, and his lips would twitch with the beginnings of a smile. 'That's a grand day!' he would say, as the aurora streamed into his eyes. 'A grand day, surely,' he went on, when you had answered him, and he gazed at you intently and roguishly as though some trick lay at the back of his head. 'You'll be going into the town?' he

asked, grunting a kind of inquiry-mark at the end of the sentence. If you told him that you were, he would bring out a red handkerchief and begin mopping his brow, still watching you very precisely, and emitting a grunt of comment at steady intervals. 'Ay,' he assured you, 'it's a grand day. It is, so it is.' His mouth widened. 'The girls will all be out walking on a fine warm day the like of this,' he declared. 'Heh, boy? But you'll have had your eye on them,. Heh, boy, heh? Have you no notion of a girl, at all?' He darted out a sudden condemning finger at you. 'Ha, I'll warr'nt you, you have. Boys, you're the queer hare. What?' And he would shake his stick villainously in the air, as he stood and let peal upon peal of laughter out of his knobbed and twisted frame. 'But tell me,' he said, subduing himself into a decent gravity again, 'is there—is there no word of your getting married?' Naturally, you smiled at the question with a boyish air of confusion. John always pretended to take this for a sign of guilt, and the laughter tumbled from him again—a heels-over-head kind of laughter, leaping and dancing like a company of devils. If anyone was in view on the roads or in the fields, John called him up to repeat his story with boisterous additions. Ultimately, you would grow tired of his foolishness, and make an excuse to move off on your journey. 'Well,' he would say in his deep voice,

shifting on his feet as he gave a last word of counsel, 'mind yourself, I'm telling you, mind yourself.' And as you walked along the road, you heard the country shafts of his wit hurled after you, as Wordsworth continued to hear the song of the Highland reaper, when he had gone far beyond the field in which she bent to her labour. You knew that, when you met John again, you would have to go through the paces of the same jest. For he knew no other. This was his single proud possession, and he never wearied of it. Whether he was in the company of young or old, whether he met you in a high-hedged and lonely lane or in the press of the fair, he rang the changes upon it loudly, and seemed to derive from it a Titanic enjoyment.

Sometimes, when no farmer could be got to give him bed and board and a half-crown a week for such odds and ends of work as he was able to perform, he was compelled to go into the town and accept poor relief. Then he would sit most of the day on the flags at the street corner, watching the traffic go by. Often, as I drove in at the mouth of the town, I was startled by a sudden roar, as of a bull, coming up from the pavement. 'Hi, boy!'—the greeting seldom varied—'any word of your getting married yet?' Such a question, shouted with enormous lung-power in an ordinarily silent street, might have

disconcerted the bravest. I did not care, however, to put a public insult upon a man of John's unconquerable good nature. But many a time, as a pretty girl heard his question, and looked up at me and giggled, I wished him in hell under my breath.

The time came when John achieved a certain greatness in his own eyes. One day he was given ten chickens in a basket, and ordered to go into the town and sell them from door to door for whatever they would bring. On the same day, as it happened, Nancy Hegarty, a sharp-faced woman with a reputation for looking after the halfpennies, had set out from her farm in the neighbourhood on a similar errand. As he was returning homewards, his basket empty and the price of the chickens safely tied up in a knot in his handkerchief, John fell in with Nancy, and for the rest of the way dragged himself along at her side. She said she had had some chickens in the town, and she declared to God that, if she had known all she was going to get for them, she would have found something to occupy her time at home. If it wasn't for their being so heavy, she would have brought the birds back with her again. She declared to God that she would. She didn't know what prices were coming to. Only a year ago she had asked tenpence and elevenpence apiece for a worse class of bird than she had just been selling, and nobody

had grumbled at the price. But how much did John think she had parted with her chickens for to-day? She declared to God it made her feel red all over, telling anybody. 'Six-and-eightpence!' she assured him. 'Six-and-eightpence,' she repeated shrilly, 'for ten chickens!' She declared to God—'Oh, Hokey 'Tarnal!' muttered John, his mouth wide open and his knees shaking under him. If he had been a religious man, I think he would have knelt down in the road and prayed; for, in the bottom of the basket he carried, lay a red handkerchief with a knot tied in one corner of it, and in the knot no less a sum than eight shillings and fourpence. How the heart of the triumphant male must have sung within him! I do not know how he held himself in from running after that, sorry twisted things though his limbs were. Certainly, when he arrived in the kitchen of the farm-house that night, you would have thought, from the enthusiasm of his bearing, that he was a man who had won a great battle, or whom a beautiful woman had promised to marry. Standing in the half-light of the doorway, he pitched his basket down on the floor and threw his head back, fixing his vivid eyes on his mistress, and drawing an excited, whistling breath through his nostrils. 'Eight-and-fourpence, mistress!' he cried, stretching his chest out. 'I sold the birds

at tenpence apiece, and here'—bringing out the red handkerchief—'is the money for them. Eight-and-fourpence! Count it, now, count it! And Nancy Hegarty, that had better birds and more meat on them'—this was a figment of John's imagination—'couldn't get more nor six-and-eightpence. Haw, haw! Where's your Nancy now? What use is women anyway? Eight-and-fourpence, mistress!' he repeated, with his mouth flung open, aghast at the brilliance of his exploit. 'Eight-and-fourpence! Did you hear that, master?—Eh, boy!'—he turned to me, grinning like Quasimodo—'eight shillings and fourpence, I tell you. Well, divil the like of this ever I knowed in all my born days! What's that? What?' And the thunder of his voice went echoing up among the tarred beams of the ceiling.

He sat down by the fire, and related a thousand instances of his cleverness at bargaining. Sixty odd years he had lived, and had never yet done anything on the level of the heroic. He had never thought about God, or lain awake at night troubling himself about a woman; he had never loved his country, or got drunk, or fought with an employer; his life had known no excitements; he had not even been an Orangeman and cursed the Pope of Rome. On that day, however, he had sold a basketful of chickens at twopence a head more than a keen-witted woman had been able to

obtain. At last he had done something to justify his existence, something to put him into a good conceit with himself. 'And you tell me you got tenpence apiece for them?' some one would say in a pause in the conversation. 'If you think it's a lie I'm telling you, there's the money,' he flashed out, pointing a dirty finger to the open handkerchief in the hands of his mistress. 'Away over and have a look at it. Count it, now, count it for yourself. Eight-and-fourpence! Isn't that right, mistress? Eight-and-fourpence for ten good chickens. And Nancy, I'm telling you'—But his words in themselves were dull. They represented to him, however, the poem of his existence. One had only to throw out the tiniest hint afterwards to set him repeating the saga of his exploits with its foolish refrain. So constant was he, indeed, in harking back to the story that in the end the people gave him 'Eight-and-fourpence' for a nickname. At length he went the way of all flesh—or, at least, of a good deal of the Irish part of it—and became a permanent burden on the rates. I am sure he must have bored his fellow-paupers beyond measure, for naturally they would not be able to estimate his great deed at its just value. In me, however, as I passed him in the street, he always found one to whom he felt able to explain himself in the certainty that he would have an attentive and

sympathetic listener. On the last occasion on which I saw him, he was leaning against the parapet of the bridge of the town, a bundle of filthy rags. As he caught sight of me driving up, his face was illuminated with a great light. 'Eight-and-fourpence, boy!' he shouted at the top of his voice, waving the remnants of a hat at me. 'Eight-and-fourpence,' I replied, giving him the password, 'for ten good chickens.' 'Man,' he cried, stamping forward and gripping me by the hand, as I drew up, 'will you ever forget it?' 'Never, John, never,' I replied gravely. He grunted, and looked at me and then away from me for a while, and I saw his lips working in preparation for the old question. 'I'm saying,' he said, clearing his throat and lowering his voice mysteriously. 'Yes, John?' 'Tell me, is there any word of your getting——' But I whipped up the horse and left him there, looking after me and peeling out his joys before he went back to his place by the parapet. Soon after that he died, and the world was poorer by a doubtful sort of joke and a story that interested at least one man enormously.

The Unpardonable Sabbath.

THE child made pictures in his mind, and the most grisly and forbidding of these was the picture of the Sabbath-day. The Sabbath that he knew under the hesitating Ulster skies that covered him took shape in his imagination as an evil-eyed old woman with a peaked face, who hobbled on a stick, and came and put out the sun and dismayed the birds out of their cheerfulness. He had been brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord of the Sabbath, and the only reading allowed to him on that day was the Bible or the 'Christian Herald,' or stories on the last page of which little girls on the point of death quoted scripture-texts, and converted their sinful parents.

His father was a great merchant in the town—a righteous man who had obtained the rewards of the righteous, and been elected to a high place in the town council. Being a righteous man, he early let his child know that Catholics and Unitarians were doomed to eternal punishment, and that the position even of those Protestant sects that had not

adopted a Presbyterian way of thinking was a little doubtful. Especially did he wax wroth at the Catholic manner of observing the Sabbath, and the child became very sorry for his Catholic fellow-countrymen because they amused themselves after noon on Sundays, and so lightly threw away their chance of joy everlasting. He was not allowed to use the word 'Sunday,' however. 'Sabbath's the word used in the Bible,' said his aunt to him very gravely, when he went down into the country, and the seventh day fell like a drawn sword between him and the delight of the fields. 'Sunday,' she said, 'is a heathen name, and, if God had meant us to use it, He would have put it in the Bible.' Bowing, the child treasured these things in his heart and went about dismally until the heathen week-days had come round again. On these days his aunt was a tender, laughing woman, infinitely rich in amusing songs and stories. On the Sabbath, however, a veil of gloom came over her and hid the ridiculous tricky lights in her eyes. She told the child that the man he saw in the moon was a heretical old fellow who had gone out one Sabbath-day to gather sticks in a wood, and that God had seen him and had become so angry with him that He had whipped him off into the moon as a punishment. Thus was another added to the sorrows of the child as he went out whistling into nature. For he never

could look up at the moon in the evening but he remembered the old fellow and thought of how cold and cheerless and lonely he must be, and all because—not knowing any better, perhaps—he had gathered a few sticks on a Sunday.

Large-eyed, and with a drooping, questioning appearance, the child trotted from byre to stable, and from stable to piggery, and from piggery to hen-house, and observed how the different animals kept the Sabbath. He noted that they all had a dull, subdued, silent air, as though they, too, felt the oppressiveness of the day. All except the hens, which were always merry, if there was food to be had, and set up a heretical and noisy cackling after an egg was laid, just as they would have done on any other day. So pleased was the child with this defiance of laws that seemed to him cruel and mortifying that he began to spend many hours of the day in the hen-house. And, often, when he came out, he would be whistling cheerfully, with his hands in his pockets. This, however, was sure to bring a face peering over the half-door, and the question whether he did not remember it was the Sabbath day. Resentfully enough, he humped up his shoulders, and made sure that it would be a psalm-tune he whistled on the next occasion. Once more a face appeared above the half-door, a little flushed under its curls. 'Didn't I tell you not to whistle on the Lord's

Day?' said a voice, the first hint of impatience appearing in its mildness. 'It was a psalm-tune,' answered the child, fixing his eye sulkily on the foot-scraper at the threshold. 'But it's the whistling, not the tune, that's the sin, child dear,' his aunt assured him, with her hand on his head. 'If you whistle a psalm-tune, that makes it all the worse.' As he walked away, the child told himself that, if God had not the sanction of the burning lake with which to enforce His decrees, he would love to go and disobey Him.

The high gate that led into the fruit-garden was near him. But on the Sabbath he was not allowed to enter that. Otherwise he might have consoled himself with a raspberry-stained mouth and an aching belly. As it was, he loosed the dog from its chain at the kennel, and went down into the meadow, where a river flowed under lilies. I met him here one Sunday, with all the reproaches gone out of his face, throwing sticks into the water, and laughing as he avoided the spray the dog shook from his body on returning from a successful adventure. I sat down beside him, and, forgetting the day it was, we played a game of cocks-and-hens—I think that is the name—with a thin-stalked, hard-headed plant that grew abundantly around us. In the intervals of the game the child laid the theological situation before me, and sought my advice upon it. Had I been a propagator of

Agnosticism, I had a sure convert sitting beside me on the river-bank. 'I say, does nearly everybody go to hell?' he demanded suddenly, pausing and puckering up his brows curiously.

One year he began to feel that he was a man and brought a walking-stick with him from the town. On the first Sunday after his arrival, he had submitted almost with amusement to be dressed for church as became (in his aunt's phrase) his father's son. He had put on a suit of black clothes that he hated, and the stiff white tie that expressed so well the absence of colour from his life on the Sabbath. He had even gone so far as to wear a hard round hat that always gave him a headache. As he was going out of the door, he took his walking-stick proudly from a corner of the wall, and the feel of it in his hand made his back very much straighter. Out in a black bonnet came his aunt, a clasped Bible in her hand. Catching sight of the stick, she drew up on the door-sill. 'I think you might dispense with your cane on the Lord's Day,' she said, between a sigh and a prohibition. 'And where,' she cried, as he stepped back with his stick into the hall, 'are your gloves? You can't go to church without gloves.' So he climbed with her up the uneven road to the white meeting-house, and wondered why a God who set so much store by a pair of gloves should be so fierce an enemy of walking-sticks.

The child, however, as I came to see, had the heart of a casuist. One Sunday I found him leaning with his fists deep in his cheeks, studying a picture-book. 'Oh, it's a sin to read,' he explained, 'and I'm not doing it. But nobody ever said it was a sin to look at the pictures.' I observed afterwards, however, that his reading on Sundays was becoming more and more secular. I was curious to know by what turn of conscience he excused himself. And this he told me was his method of discovering whether a book was fit to read on a Sunday. He first looked over the pages without reading them, and if he came upon the name of God anywhere, he decided that this was a Sunday book; if not, not. Seeing the book he was reading was a piece of thoroughly heathen literature, I asked him to point out to me the hallmark whose presence enabled him to read it with an easy conscience. He turned a few pages, and the name of God was certainly there over his finger. It was put in the mouth of a drunken soldier, however, and was by way of being used as an oath. Still, I left the child without any hint that I had seen through his casuistries. I had no wish to bring back the clouds over his Sabbath. When I saw him last, he was in revolt against the whole thing. He had learned the art of rat-hunting on Sundays with a dog. He was glowing with excitement, and a shapeless rat lay beside

him on the ground. 'When I'm a man, I'll never go to church,' he declared; 'never, never, never!' I smiled. 'No, by God!' he added, going white at his blasphemy.

A Fragment on the Glens.

OVER the Glens of Antrim peace hangs like a cloud. Blue in the quiet air of evening, a family of hills gathers close to the sea, and among them the Glens lie hidden, and water falls down them with a tune. Old-world, civil, with pleasantness in their voices, the people, if you venture far enough, assemble at the half-door and wonder at the stranger who passes.

There is a fairy thorn near Cushendun, and a hill where they say a brave man can see the fairies dancing at night, but I do not know whether the belief in fairies is general among the people. I asked a man, an aggressively healthy farmer, if he believed in them, and he turned on me quizzingly and laughed, as much as to say that he was as intelligent as I was, for all my airs of the town. I asked him did he not think there might be something in the talk one heard about the Banshee. At this he became as serious as he had previously been sceptical. 'I don't think it,' he declared; 'I know it. And he went on to tell me how he had heard the Banshee crying one night, and how the

next day a boat was washed against the rocks below and a man drowned before help came. A woman of the district told a friend of mine that she had not only heard the Banshee, but had seen it. She said that, as she was walking out at night, something shaped like a torn rag had flown over the hedge before her, crying out piteously. As a death had followed, there was no need to guess at the nature of the apparition.

One cannot stay in a lonely place in the Glens and remain uninfected by a belief in these strange portents. For myself, I lived for a time in a house built solitary upon a hill, that slopes, with an old graveyard in its breast, down to the sea. One night I was lying awake after the moon had set, when the most piteous wailing I ever heard came to my ears, as if from a great distance. It rose again and again, and died away, leaving behind it a silence and darkness that were almost unbearable. The friend who was with me shuddered and pretended to laugh, but he could offer no explanation of the sound, and it was not till the end of a quarter of an hour or so, when it had come nearer, that we could assure ourselves we were only listening to a cat that had been out among the wet grass and had caught a bad cold. Until that, for all our pretence of scepticism, we had been ready enough to admit the Banshee into the circle of credible things.

Gay and generously coloured with fuchsias, the Glens are inhabited for the man from the town with an air of unreality. We hear a deal about the dreamfulness of the Irish people, and we are told that this is the reason why the Irish have not succeeded in making their country great and prosperous. A more probable reason, however, is that they have remembered only the lesser dreams and forgotten the greater ones. At present the people of the Glens, like the rest of Ireland, are being reminded of the heroes and poets and lovers that once walked there in the spacious light. One cannot sit in those parts, when the sun has set, and watch the reflected fires climbing the sky behind the looming hill, Lurigedan, and not believe that afar off the gods are banqueting tumultuously, with cressets burning and torch-bearers throwing up smoke and flame to the roof of evening. One realises that so vast a night as one finds here may well have afforded a proper setting to Cuchullain, the hero of heroes, as he paced to and fro on the ridge of the hill, dreaming of the strange woman who was not his wife, and meditating dangerous battles against the enemies of Ulster. Separated from the sea by another hill, Ossian is supposed to be asleep under a loose gathering of grey stones. Cattle browse near his tomb, and a poultry-run fills one corner of the field, where cockerels quarrel about food or

love or what not. As one moves towards the place among the clumps of foxgloves that droop with their bells in that silent valley, one comes upon a man toiling at a dung hill with a grape—an odd, gentle man in a shirt, curved wearily to the earth, and wondering out of his sadness that foolish people should come so far to see so little. Like his neighbours, he seems haunted by a dream, but he does not remember the meaning of his dream, because a roomful of gentlemen in Dublin decided many years ago that, if the Irish did not forget their fathers, and the language their fathers spoke, and the stories their fathers made, they could never become competent hewers of wood and drawers of water to their British governors. I went into a cottage near by, where a stubble-bearded, red-headed man was bowed over the fire, smoking a clay pipe and with Irish in his head; but he would speak nothing but English. ‘Sure, what’s the use of Irish?’ he said, shaking his head, when I questioned him. The philosophy of Utilitarianism, however, has not served wonderfully well in the sleepy Glens of Antrim.

One woman I met who revered the old tongue. She was stout and grey-headed, and had an air of much wisdom in her time-beaten brows and pursed-up lips. She carried on a trade in teas for holiday-makers, and Irish speakers came there only too willingly and sat over her turf

fire. But even she had no kind words for the Irish that is being taught in the schools of the district. 'I tell you,' she cried, with her hands under her apron, 'it's Connacht Irish, and Connacht Irish is bad Irish!' She had no faith in any nook of the world outside her own province. She could not endure even a Connaught policeman, declaring that the North alone was capable of producing fine men and fair women. She looked with great respect on the men of Belfast, perhaps because they have money. Possibly, the people of Belfast will soon be willing to give all their money—and more than that—to recover something of the vision that even now make the eyes of the old people of the Glens so beautiful and full of a strange peace.

Companions of my Youth.

I CAN scarcely have been intended by Providence for a spirited or adventurous career. Otherwise, I should have been born with a manlier taste in birds and beasts. I should have spent my infancy on the unsaddled backs of horses, and have gone out among the rabbit-warrens with a company of dogs at my foot. I loved horses well enough to decide, for a time, that, when I grew up, I would earn my living as the driver of a jaunting car; and, as for dogs, provided they were not strange to me, I was always ready to give them a generous piece of my heart. Still, my relations, both with dogs and with horses, were in the nature of idle fancies, flirtations of boyhood. They were not based on the solid ground of friendship, or—my fondness for hens seemed to demand the use of the stronger word—of abiding passion. I cannot remember the time when the sight of a hen did not awaken in me a curious sense of delight. I came early to love hens, almost as one love one's brothers and sisters, and thought of

them with reverence and bullied them accordingly. Other boys went clambering through whin-bushes, and groping in the hedges, and climbing high trees, in search of the nests of wilder birds. But in bird's-nesting, in this sense of the word, I could never take any but a broken interest. I liked the appearance of the pale blue and pepper-coated and shadowy green eggs well enough, but they seemed to be of a trifling and nursery-suited quality compared with the large and hand-filling splendour of the eggs I found in the hen-loft, or among the hay in the stables. Here was something comfortable, something of weight and solidity, like stars or great jewels in their radiant beauty. I would as readily have compared a pea to a purple grape, as I would have hesitated in my choice between the egg of a thrush and that of a hen with a reputable pedigree.

I determined before long that it was the chief duty of a hen to lay eggs, and that a hen that refused to lay was justly an occasion for severe measures. I am sure it was a desire to see more eggs in the world, rather than any impulse of cruelty, that was the spring of a certain harshness of which I was guilty. I will admit that, on the first occasion on which I dipped a chicken in water, the chicken had not yet reached the laying age. I have no defence to offer for this aberration of conduct. I am sure, however, that, after that, I

never soused a hen unless I was pretty sure that she was (to use the technical word) clocking—or, in other words, that she had turned rebel and refused to lay, preferring to sit indolently on a brood of eggs. On every well-disposed farm it is necessary, of course, that a certain proportion of the hens should periodically cease in this way from their labours and devote a sort of enthroned leisure to the reproduction of their kind. Unhappily, there is always an excessive number of them who had rather been sitting than laying. Every farmer—or, rather, every farmer's wife—is hard put to it at times to restrain this creditable enough passion in the hen-loft. Myself, I always found a dose of cold water the surest remedy. Some people attach a piece of coloured ribbon to the tail of a bird that has revolted. This sets her running round the haggard and the dunghill in a mad fear, until, in utter weariness, she has forgotten the desire for a published maternity. The cold-water cure seems to me to be not only less cruel to the hen but infinitely more exhilarating for the executioner.

One recognises a clocking hen easily, especially when the afternoon corn has been scattered on the ground. The clocking hen is always late. It is as though she had clung to her nest and wrestled with her hunger until wrestling was no longer possible. She comes up to her sisters, her brothers,

her cousins, and her aunts with long strides, the feathers about her neck ruffled in a kind of sullenness, and her throat incessantly pouring out an unpleasant, gloating sound. She is a selfish bird, stabbing with her bill at any neighbour who comes within what she regards as her sphere of influence. Even at the approach of the male bird, obtrusively gay and domineering, she can utter nothing but a sort of growl. I have never been able to abide peevishness or useless temper in man, bird, or beast; and I confess, when I observed the behaviour of a clocking hen, I was not always able to keep my indignation within bounds. Like Polyphemus with his eye intact, I swooped down upon the ill-mannered bird, a great cloud of cocks, hens, and chickens rising with a scream round my knees and fighting with each other for escape. Having caught her by the tail, I settled her flapping wings, and, twisting her under my arm, marched off, pleased as a boy who punishes a younger brother for his own good, to a hole in a plantation that was used for washing potatoes. Deep into the water I plunged her, deep and deeper still. She came out of it dazed, choking, and frightened. She shook her head, half in anger, half in horror, at the cold and the wetness. If I thought that anger was the predominant feeling, I ducked her again, and continued to do so until she seemed to have come to a subdued and reasonable state of mind. Then

I put her gently on her feet, and chased her out of the plantation. 'Off with you now,' said I, with a warning note, 'and be a good hen, and don't come clocking round here again.' In spite of my cruelty, the hen and I would be as warm friends as ever, when once she had given up her ambition to rear a family. I am afraid, however, this was due less to any sweetness of which my nature could boast than to the fact that I had always a few gooseberries or a pocketful of oats or some other food to give away when I went through the yard.

If I was brutally impatient of clocking hens, however, what must be thought of my conduct towards the champion cock of the farmyard? Every farmyard has its champion cock. By right of age and a driving will-power and a long procession of battles, he has worked himself into a position of which any flowing-robed monarch might be proud. Blood-red and plethoric of crest, his eye constantly aflame with indignation, his head defiantly erect, his chest expanded, he struts about with the air of a Lord Mayor who has just been knighted and who is attracting all eyes at some function in his suburban conventicle. At meal-times, he passes from hen to hen, discovering choice morsels of food, and calling on the hens with a pompous and showy generosity to accept them. One marvels at the condescension, at the lavish thoughtfulness, of the bird. Should he spy a rival cock on the out-

skirts of the crowd, however, the hollowness of his pretence of unselfishness at once becomes apparent. Like a rosy-faced farmer whose apples are being stolen, he is down upon the intruder with a darting beak and threatening spurs. No chivalrous child can see the fellow's insolent greed, his insatiable and bullying jealousy, at work, and refrain from crying 'Brute!' and clamorously rushing to the aid of the weaker fowl. Sometimes I stood by the hens, as they fed, with a whip behind my back, and waited for the first signs of the great cock's fury. I encouraged the shy and timid brethren to approach, like an agitator urging poor and ignorant people to assert their rights and their manhood. Immediately the great cock towered over in their direction, I brought out the whip, and lashed him heavily with it over the broad of his back. Making a leap in the air, he broke into a run, and I after him. Like a lost thing he fled, his head down and forward, his ungainly legs seeming to grow longer and longer in some miraculous way. After I had chased him over a few walls and round the haggard and across a narrow stream and followed him across a field or so, I usually thought it time to leave him to his own reflections. On returning to the yard—alas, for animal fidelity!—I always found the hens accepting morsels of food from the other cocks with every show of pleasure. I put an end to Cæsarism in the farmyard, but, Heaven knows, I

may have sapped the very foundations of home life in doing so.

I loved the fowls well enough to invent becoming names for the majority of them. I loved them well enough, indeed, to call some of them after my relatives and the people I liked best; and sometimes I was astonished that the people pulled wry faces and missed seeing the compliment. Oh, the many-coloured brood of them—Leghorn and Spanish and Cochin China and Brahmaputra and Dorking and Friesland and what not—they were to me as various and as dear as the sky, the sea, or the face of a woman! One of them, a white-clad Cochin-China chicken, I named Lazarus, because the feathers, as they fell down his small body and his lean, stilt-like legs, took, in my imagination, the shape of grave-clothes. There was a hen, too, rheumatic and dropsical, of a faded brown colour, that we called 'The Cripple,' because of the slow and painful manner in which she walked. One day I went out with a cousin, who was beginning a course of medicine, and put a load of shot in her in the haggard, ending her weariness. And, having recovered her body, we dissected it with great enthusiasm. It always hurt me to see a hen killed in the ordinary way, however. I had no patience with the slow bleeding to death, the vain attempt to beat the wings and be free, the piteous look from the dying, pink-circled eye. I remember

resolving in my heart that I would devote my years to the invention of some kind of guillotine by which fowls might be brought to their death more immediately. Even yet, I am sure there is no bird or beast killed with less humanity. But I must not remember these things, or I shall find myself turning public censor and eater of vegetables.

An Irish Keynote.

I DROVE a while ago over the edge of Mayo into the ragged outskirts of Roscommon. Ballaghaderreen, a town near the border, is an uneasy group of public-houses and small shops, attracting broken lines of donkey-carts, loaded to the crib, along the surrounding roads. I passed through it on a market day. Donkeys poured into it as thick as wasps in midsummer. Men, gaunt and bearded, sat in the carts with staves, and were kings among the parcels of women-folk, who sat with their backs to the family ass, nodding and blethering under the pride of black bonnets. I met the disordered army of them coming down the uneven road that cuts the De Freyne estate in two like a crooked knife. They had moved from their cabins, poor and warped, but bent upon the enjoyments of a market day—upon gossip and whisky and small purchases. They had stolen a petty living from the jaws of a bog. They had driven the red heather from a few square yards of moor, and drained off the floods, and were now

about to snatch the flying joy of a market day from under the nose of a black and dismal destiny. Russet, comfortless, full of tears, their land stretches out under the wet sky, a monotony of turf and of deep black holes where turf has once been. How dwarf-like and poor are the little farmsteads on the estate will be understood when I mention that I saw bowed peasants reaping their corn with sickles. One has the romantic love for the red skirt, and the ass twining along beneath its creels, and the bare feet, and the wild eyes, and the mud-walled cottages. But what old wounds do some of these memorise! What a drought of joy and laughter they mark! Barren, truly, the years have been for Ireland. One walks here amid the tombs of heroes and among living men that are but the untidy shadows of the large and exulting figures they might have been.

Over the waste, from the crest of the hill, the Loughglynn nunnery looks out, a candle of light set among ancient trees. Only a few years ago this was the headquarters of the Dillon Estate. Haunted by the fear of the anger of a squeezed and withered people, an agent dwelt here behind a wall of armed police. It was a shifting battlefield of the rights of one and the wrongs of many. One now sees no ominous figure of a policeman at the cross-roads, but, instead, the white form of a nun of the Order of St. Francis, and groups of happy children laughing round her under the

trees. Recently these Franciscan ladies came over from Belgium, resolved to build up industries in the bare places of Ireland. They acquired the Dillon mansion, grey-fronted and forbidding. They could not, of course, pull the older peasants from their customs and ways, but they have set themselves to fill the girls with a larger spirit, and to train their fingers and their eyes in that which is useful and beautiful and just. Those who have always dwelt in an abundant home can scarcely realise the emptiness of a hearth where pennies seem like gifts of God, and the food is poor and dirt rife, and the spirit of decay inhabits, and almost the only pleasures remaining are those of the "old men playing at cards with a twinkling of ancient hands." Despondent, encaged, revolting against fate, the youths fly off to America, leaving wet faces behind them. The girls, too, runaways into the big world, step out of their tiny homes, full of hopes and fears, and sail away to the New Island. The real Ireland has hitherto been a country to fly from—uncouth, desolate, and sad. It has been the problem of the blessed ladies of St. Francis to put in place of this a land of busy industry, of restraining joy, and large with golden ideals.

The white ladies treated me with all kindness and charity. Seated within the porch, an old woman, dilapidated and grey, told her beads with

lean fingers, and her face was raised upwards, a thin flame of prayer. One could not but bow the head before such inconsolable sorrow as had whitened her lips. One could but be filled with joy at the sight of a figure so withered creeping for rest and holy thoughts into the spiritual silence of the convent walls. It was not as the comforters of age, however, but as the guides of little children that I had the most complete view of the nuns of Loughglynn. Lofty room after lofty room was filled with glad-eyed girls in clean pinafores; industrious, merry, proud, under the supervision of a smiling nun. One table was covered with artificial flowers they had made. Other tables were surrounded by girls engaged in embroidery work, gathering the bobbins—spools may be a better word—with spry fingers, and converting a chaos of dyed threads into an elegant harmony of colour. Further on they were making lace. The artistic spirit has always been pervasive in Ireland, though a thousand other calls have diverted the people from the use of their gift for beauty. The women, however, have always preserved their skill in lace-making. I imagine when the Irish spirit has taken complete hold of the country and has filled the mind of the designer, as it is filling that of the worker, you will find the most beautiful lace in the world made there. Near the lace room a little girl was beating tentative notes on a piano; I

heard her efforts through a half-open door. In another apartment great wooden frames were erected; balls of yarn rolled about the floor; I saw the warp and woof of carpets rising higher and higher up the harp-string arrangement within the frames. I had never looked upon carpet-making as a game suited to children, but here they slid their dexterous fingers among the strings, and with little tags of wool made up patterns of a remarkable beauty. The white ladies do not ask for praise; they deprecate enthusiasm in regard to their work. But we cannot gaze at those children, delighted and humming at their crafts, and remain cold. "What is the best colour?" said Fionn to Grania before trouble came to them. And she answered, "The colour of childhood." Childhood, warped and gutter-stained and prematurely wise, such as you have it in London, is no such beautiful vision. Even in the sad Roscommon march, it had until lately little enough that was gay and vivid and aflame. Now, however, the fine colour of childhood is blushing out again. The keynote of the new Ireland is youth and industry and gladness.

The Orange Idealist.

THERE was once a woman—I knew her well, for she helped to nurse me—who believed in her heart that God was an Orangeman. She also believed that a strong family likeness existed between Satan and the Pope of Rome. She was a mild woman, thin and worn about the cheeks, and inestimably patient under a child's buffetings. She had the gentlest of eyes behind her black-rimmed spectacles. Her face was saintlily sad under a bonnet rich in a widow's bugles. Yet, much as she looked the part, she was no self-torturing ascetic. She had a dear regard for snuff, a little nasty-smelling parcel of which always lay on the nursery chimney-piece. She indulged, too, in the luxury of ideals. She dreamed from morning till night of an Ireland out of which all the Catholics had been driven, and in which Protestants would be able to live without the fear that at any hour evil-eyed people might sweep down upon them and cut their throats. So far as

I could gather, Catholics—or Papishes, as she preferred to call them—had no definite object in life but to cut the throats of Protestants. Being a Protestant, I naturally went about the streets in a state of considerable trepidation. Every one whom I met and who had at all a doubtful cast of face, I put down at once as a Papist and hurried past, with a horrified, dry feeling at the back of my mouth. One day, at a time when the town was in a flutter of riotous excitement, I was going to school with my sister, when we found ourselves in the middle of a great crowd, shouting and rushing hither and thither. I had no doubt in the world that the campaign of throat-cutting had begun. ‘The Papishes have risen!’ I cried to my sister, and, hoping that she would follow me, made helter-skelter for home. My sister, being of a less bigoted and fearful turn of mind, went on to school; and she was right, for the crowd was only running to a fire. She was less intimately instructed than I, however, in the wicked designs of the Catholics, for my nurse had no mind to waste the stores of her wisdom on a mere girl.

There is a book which has afforded entertainment to many broad-minded grown-up people. The name of it is ‘Forty Coming Wonders,’ and the author a Mr. Baxter, who does not like Catholics or Socialists, and who has a habit of prophesying the date of the end of the world. This

book my nurse revered next to the Bible. There were pictures in it representing lions or tigers or some such beasts, each of them provided with seven or more heads. She spent hour after hour gazing at these and puzzling out to herself the points of resemblance between the many-headed beasts and the Church of Rome. She loved, too, to sit in a rocking-chair beside the fire, with its tall wire screen, and read out the most horrible details of the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day. Every tale, of course, found its local habitation in my mind, and the world became to me a place which only a kind Protestant English Government prevented from becoming a shambles. This gentle woman was herself full of butcherous thoughts enough. She loved no song so well as 'The Protestant Boys,' and the version she sang of it—a version very common in the North of Ireland—portended a sufficiently drastic doom for the Catholics. Her thin face lit up with a sort of delight as, with her arms wrapped round me, she shrilled out the chorus. It ran like this:

Slitter, slaughter,
Holy Water!
Sprinkle the Papishes every one!
And that's what we'll do,
And we'll cut them in two,
And the Protestant Boys 'll carry the drum!

I was trained up in this song, an infant Hannibal, pledged to eternal enmity towards Rome. Every opportunity was taken to strengthen me in this vehement faith. Our favourite recreation soon came to be a walk down Sandy Row, a territory, as I recall it, of low-built, white-walled Orange dwellings, where my nurse had many friends. She took us to a house in the neighbourhood with a regularity we loved, and set us down in front of the fire with cakes of potato bread in our hands. Over the fireplace, a coloured delph image of William the Third stood—a necessary idol in every true Orange household. I learned to worship that image, as I am afraid I did not worship God. I looked reverently upon King William, sitting there on his delph horse with the air of a man leading an army to victory, as a heroic person who had somehow or other saved my family and myself from being foully murdered.

Every year in the North of Ireland a day is set apart for the worship of King William. On the Twelfth of July, the Orangemen remember how years and years ago Protestant William chased Papist James from the banks of the Boyne, and can scarcely contain themselves with delight in consequence. At the great day approaches, the town becomes dazed at night with the thud of drums here, drums there, drums everywhere. Over the Orange streets broad arches are hung,

rich in tags of orange and blue paper and in garlands of orange lilies, and containing pictures of King William and instructive scenes from Irish history. Mottoes are set in them, eloquent about 'civil and religious liberty,' and calling upon true Protestants to remember sundry things for which 'our fathers fought and died.' My nurse was not a person to allow me to forget. On the eve of 'the Twelfth,' as it is called, she led me into the noisy country of the arches, and, taking me into a dark little shop, bought me a paper orange sash for a penny. In some years, when money was abundant, she provided me with a shilling drum as well: she never let a year pass without seeing that I had, at least, a tin whistle. She was an infectious propagandist. She was, for the time being, a saint admitted to the splendours of Paradise, or—a better simile—a war-horse smelling the battle not too far off. As for me, she led me into every extravagance of enthusiasm. She had often taken me by the hand and pointed out the huge drums in the Orange procession, showing me with a thrill of pride in her voice the drum-heads bespattered with blood from the wrists of the maddened drummers. Every drummer, as he flogs his instrument in a kind of Bacchanalian frenzy, feels himself in duty bound to gash and cut his wrists on the wooden rim, and if the drum-head be not red with blood by the end of the day,

he looks askance at himself as one who has not offered due sacrifice to King William's pious, glorious, and immortal memory. Naturally, it was the earliest ambition of my childhood to be an Orange drummer. I could achieve no bloody feats, however, on my fragile shilling instrument. Consequently, I had to go elsewhere to obtain the required training for my future profession. I found a hard enough substance in the kitchen table. Night after night, I stood before it, hammering my tiny wrists upon its square corners, until the skin was red and bruised and aching, and uplifting what lusty voice I had in a rapturous singing of 'The Protestant Boys,' or 'The Boyne Water.' I do not know if I ever actually succeeded in making the blood flow. I hurt myself sufficiently, however, to feel mighty proud and Protestant for several days afterwards.

The Twelfth of July I loved more than Christmas Day. On the Twelfth, thousands and tens of thousands—nay, hundreds of thousands—of Orangemen marched forth, with banners rioting in the wind and drums roaring. Every man in the gaudy and haphazard army wore a tasselled sash, curiously coloured, about his shoulders. Here and there a fellow carried a wooden Bible on a wooden pole. Others walked along the sides of the procession with a sort of spear in their hands, and woe to any man who tried to cross from one side of the

road to the other until the procession had gone completely by. At a few yards' distance from each other, fife band and brass band flung different tunes into the air, horrible as the warring of creeds. Cromwell and King William, in all sorts of odd shapes and attitudes and colours, looked down from countless banners, and other flags showed Queen Victoria presenting a Bible to a humble heathen king, with 'The Secret of England's Greatness' as a motto at the foot of the picture. Flute-players, drunk with their own music, walked backwards in an odd kind of dancing step before the drums, grotesque Orpheuses in their Sabbath clothes. Everywhere was loud din and colour—the din and dust and colour of war, and the curiously angry brows of men with haunted imaginations. Beautiful in my strip of orange paper, terrible with my shilling drum, a dangerous flute peeping from my pockets, I was led out by the hand to watch the passing of these mighty Joseph's-coated warriors. If I had not yet ridden the goat, as they say of those who have been initiated into the Orange order, I was an Orangeman at least in my beating pulses and along my quivering spine. When the carnival had gone by, I was trotted back to the nursery, and coached in the story of a few more massacres. I learned how the Orangemen had beaten the Catholics into the waters of the

Lough, and I praised them for it. I heard of innocent girls shot, and of little boys cut down in open daylight as they were running messages for their parents. The police I was taught to distrust as men who were Fenians at heart, and I admired an Orange assault upon a police-barracks more than the storming of Sebastopol. Like nearly all Protestant children brought up in an Ulster town, I came to look on Catholics as a kind of wild beasts to be avoided, if not exterminated. There was a very mild old Catholic gentleman, who lived two doors away from our house. I often burst into tears when he stopped and spoke to me in the street.

A Hero of the Kerb.

I SOON became accustomed to the pit-a-pat of his feet on the pavements. They were naked feet, and innocently dirty. Indeed, Nicholas was all dirty and, the most of him, naked, for he was clad in the merest entanglement of shirt-ends and green pieces of jacket and trousers.

Nicholas was a beggar—a fat, false beggar with about thirteen years to his credit; and he plied his business at one of the most thunderous of the street-corners near the centre of Belfast. On days on which the streets were dry and a cold grey wind blowing, he had a way of suddenly appearing, as if through a chink between the flags, and endangering your path with a whirling adventure in somersaults. Coming to his feet, his greasy cap clutched in his hand, he was ready with a salute, as he cried out, ‘Hilloa! I’m starving. Could you lend us a penny to buy a bun with?’ He was none of your beggars seeking gifts and gratuities. Whatever you gave him he always put on the footing of a loan as

between one gentleman and another. If you had the business instinct to refuse him, he would hitch up one shoulder and, with a hand deep in a trouser-hole, would look down at the gutter with a troubled air, murmuring 'Decency!' in a low voice, like a man who makes love and does not wish the passers-by to hear. 'Decency! Sure, what's a penny?' If you broke out in a laugh at his seriousness, he would turn up his flat, smudged face at you, his eyes twinkling sympathetically, a broad cackle from ear to unwashed ear; he made it apparent that he was able to enter into a joke as well as anybody, and that he regarded your miserliness as an excellent bit of comic acting such as he might have gone in for himself, if he had been in your position. The worst of it was, he contrived to suggest so clear a faith in the better part of you by what I might call the accent of his laughter, that you felt bound to vindicate his good opinion and lay the mite that he asked for in his palm. 'You're a gentleman,' he would say quietly, with his hand at his forehead; and with a warning 'Hi! hi! hi!' like a circus-boy, he suddenly fell to his somersaults again, until he drew up, red-faced and panting, and grinned back at you friendlily from far away down the street.

On nights of rain, he performed his beat with a diminished buoyancy along the wet, mottled pavements. Coming like a tattered ghost out of the

darkness, his shoulders high, the collar of his jacket gathered firmly round his throat, he attracted your attention by trotting silently along under your elbow, drawing in his breath all the time in a whistling, chattering way. 'Hilloa, Nicholas!' you cried, suddenly perceiving him. 'Hilloa!' he muttered into his coat-collar, with a great pretence of shivering, 'I was looking for you.' He looked up at you confidently. 'I was beginning to be afraid I wouldn't be able to go home the night,' he admitted with a nervous laugh. Just as you were about to ask him why, you would hear him groan. 'Oh, holy Jasus, here's the peelers!' he would say rapidly, and he slipped off by himself and walked apart from you until you were past the policeman and the danger was over. 'I never seen people so poor,' he complained, coming back to his trot under your elbow. 'I've been waiting round here all night looking for a penny to make up the price of a bed——' He broke off and shuddered for a moment. 'And then I seen you coming down the street. It's just as well,' he commented, and fell silent, leaving the next word with you. If you did not seize the occasion and say something, he continued dauntlessly, as though he had never given you the opening. 'God only knows,' he would reflect out loud, 'what I would have done if I was to have missed you!' If you remained obstinate, he would appear to hesitate, and with an

insinuating nip at your sleeve, his attack became openly frontal. 'Say, mister,' he asked, a notion of anxiety creeping into his voice, 'are you going to lend us that wing?' And, in support of his claims, he urged in a gentle, winning murmur, 'Decency, decency! Sure, what's a wing to the like of you, and you full of money? It's not as if you had never seen me before——' Certainly, it was not. Square-browed, square-bodied, baggy, in his peaked cap and his unshod feet, he had become a kind of familiar second self to me on my homeward travels. 'That's right!' he would declare, as he slipped the money from my fingers with a sigh of relief—relief, it always seemed, on my behalf rather than on his own: 'I knowed I could trust you.' And, with his curious circus-boy shout, 'Hi! hi! hi!' he would speed off cheerily into the darkness, his feet dancing in the mud and his chin deep in the gathered-up rags of his jacket.

Later, he emerged out of beggardom, and became a seller of evening newspapers, and, in his spare moments, of matches. Or rather, he remained in beggardom, and only wore his new calling as a cloak that would hide his true self from the too inquisitive eyes of the police. Of one thing I am sure. He never offered me a paper or a box of matches in the expectation that I would take either of them. '*Ha'penny Liar*, ma'am! Two million Boers killed!' might be a fine enough cry, as he

sidled up to a lady, and pressed his wares on her. But with me he remained on more ancient terms of intimacy. Business dealings between friends of so old a standing would have been a degradation. He would still frequently be penniless, and at such times he was always in need of exactly the same sum as capital to set him up in business for the day. I wondered how it was that he never seemed able to save anything. One night I discovered the explanation as I passed a doorway down a side street, and found him cursing and arguing and throwing pennies in the filthy glimmer of a gas-lamp. Surrounding him was a ragged and noisy crew of infants of the gutter, some of them bare-headed, most of them bare-footed, and the eyes of all of them bright under the rigour of the game. Red head, flat nose, head-sore, hunch-back, each of them had his point of colour or of interest, and, as they gambled, one could hear few sounds among the falling pennies except a wonderful and suggestive riot of cursing. Protestant and Catholic, they laid aside all their differences and confused their heads for the moment with the beautiful dreams of avarice. Like a leader, both in physical bigness and in his eloquence with the divine names, Nicholas sat among them. I realised the enormity of his wickedness, but I never could preach to him about it, even when he confessed to me that he and the others were accustomed to go into a dis-

mantled part of the town and lay twopenny bets on the English races with a dealer in second-hand clothes.

Gambling, however, was only a secondary interest in the life of Nicholas. His real passion, even though he traded in the Orange newspapers, was the passion of Nationalism. I am afraid his political enthusiasm must sometimes have interfered with his business. I often found him leaning against a wall, splendidly indifferent to the scores of possible customers who went by, his eyes greedily engaged upon the report of some new utterance of Mr. Redmond or Mr. Davitt. Out of the depth of his rags, too, he frequently brought torn and besmeared volumes bearing upon the great things in Irish history. These he promised faithfully to lend me. But I preferred, somehow, to rely upon the word of his mouth as the means of my instruction. And assuredly he justified me in my decision. I learned from his lips a hundred things that I have never been able to find in a book, and compared with his method of narration, the mere literary style seems namby-pamby and inexpressive. 'And then Cromwell, hell roast him,' was a typical way he had of launching into a sentence. Like many people, he believed that Parnell had never really died, but was out fighting on the side of the Boers under the name of De Wet. Even Parnell, however, loomed

less magnificently in his imagination than did Thomas Sexton, who had for a time been one of the Members for the town. 'Who gave you decent streets?' he would ask, throwing out an arm oratorically to the bed of the road; and then vehemently, as though he were refuting an argument, he would answer, 'Sexton!' Question after question of the same sort he flooded upon you, and you came in the end to look on 'Sexton' as a kind of universal answer to the world's conundrums. Indeed, I am not sure that if you had faced Nicholas with the question, 'Who made the world?' itself he would not have answered, 'Sexton,' in all seriousness and ignorance of the fact that he was thereby giving the lie to one of the central principles of his faith. Still, even if he seldom (as the saying goes) darkened a chapel door and had little dogmatic hold on the creed of his people, he was strenuously Catholic in his claims and was a fluent critic of the vices of the Protestants. 'But, Nicholas,' I said to him once, bringing him out of a jungle of hot and fanatical words, 'why do you say all this to me, when you know I'm a Protestant?' He glanced up at me, his head cocked sideways and suspicious. 'Go 'long,' he said contemptuously, 'you're no Protestant.' I told him that I certainly was, that I had been brought up as a true-blue Presbyterian. Spitting in his smutty palm, he held it

solemnly out to me, with a subtle air, I thought, of congratulation. 'Shake hands,' he said, flushing under his dirt; 'I knowed you weren't a Protestant. The Catholics and the Presbyterians was always friends.' He then recalled incidents in the rising of '98 in which his ancestors and mine had fought behind the same leaders. As I left him that day, he made me a promise that, should the Fenians ever gain the upper hand in a storm of battle, he would keep an eye out for me and see that not one hair of my head should be injured.

Soon afterwards, I missed him from the streets, and my walks into town became less pleasant. He re-appeared, however, about the end of a month, a little harder in the lines of his face and with his hair cut very short. I had already made inquiries about him among his brother Ishmaelites, and had heard strange rumours, which he confirmed with blushes. He had passed the month in a gaol, having been caught red-handed in an assault upon a man twice his size, and having buffeted and kicked vigorously at the police who came to take him. During the march of a Nationalist procession through the town, a bully had rushed out of the Orange throng that lined the side-walks and had made an attempt to capture a drum, or a deacon-pole, or something. Boldly, Nicholas had leaped at him with all the infant vigour of his teeth and feet and hands. I remonstrated with him about the rashness he had

shown; but he could not see that he had done less than his duty. 'He was interfering with the band!' he cried, his voice rising; 'he was interfering with the band!' I knew that in a day or two another procession was to go through the streets, and that stones would probably be thrown and heads be broken. I asked Nicholas to give me his promise to stay out of it. 'Were you ever in gaol?' he asked me, almost impatiently. 'Never again, if I know it,' he said, shaking his head solemnly; 'I've had enough of trouble.' The day came and with it the riot. I met Nicholas afterwards with a suspicious gash across his cheek. I accused him of having broken his word to me and taken part in the riot. At first he reddened and looked guilty. Then he raised his arms into the air and stretched himself in a long comfortable yawn that ended in a little ripple of laughter. 'Ach!' he cried, looking me in the eyes, and twinkling all over, 'sure, I couldn't help it!' 'You'll only get yourself into trouble again,' I told him. He became grave, and the look in his eyes was convincing. 'That's the last time,' he said; 'it's the last time—it's the truth I'm telling you.' 'Even if you see an Orange procession passing the end of a Nationalist street?' I asked him. His face darkened as he looked away from me. 'Hell roast them,' he said; 'let them keep to their own end of the town!'

A Lover of Liberty.

LIKE Nicholas, Micky begged and sold papers for a living. Indeed, when I first met the boys, they were not only rivals in business but friends in the doubtful face of fortune. They had pinched bellies in common, even if their religious creeds were different. Micky was a thin, trembling straw of a boy—a match on legs, as it were. His cheeks were usually as mottled with dirt as a hoarding at which mud has been thrown. In addition, he carried about with him as many curious cuts as a German student, and a beggar's full share of sores. I inquired into the cause of all this, and I discovered that it was home life, without which, they say, cities and nations and empires topple. Even when Micky had thought the matter out, however, and had abandoned the home for the arch of the railway-bridge and the threepenny lodging-house, he did not seem to be any more inclined to become a knight of cleanliness. Perhaps he realised that in his case dirt was the most efficient armour against penury that he could wear.

Certainly, if his bare feet were cut by the sharp paving-stones, or if he was compelled to come out with his head bandaged in an obscene rag, he always used his misfortune as an argument in favour of a more strenuous and open-handed charity. Empty of any coherent philosophy of life, such as Nicholas sometimes seemed to have, he had still much of the philosophical humour. His lips were like little twinkling snakes in their smiling, and he had a merry, monkeyish way of scratching his head that seemed to imply that the spiteful conduct of fate amused him on the whole. He was a grinning, rather than a laughing, boy—whimsical, with a head cocked ever sideways, an actor in the making (as he rubbed his hands together, for example, in an exaggerated way in the breath of the cold). I am sure, however, that his shivering was not all done to order. The wind seemed really to blow through him—to whistle in the pipe of his throat and to chatter in his lean bones.

Flying from the unpleasant warmth of the home, he became at his ease in the crowded and hastening world of the pavement. He sought after money, as Socrates sought after wise words, in the multitude of his fellows; and if you could give him none, he assured you, with a smile, that it was all right, and would do some time again, and, on the next day, he would gravely come up, and claim it as a

debt that you owed to him. 'Remember, I let you off yesterday,' he would say, scratching his head, and smirking up at you doubtfully.

There was only one way in which it was possible to rid yourself of his presence, and that was to convince him that you were a medical student. He feared medical students more than he feared even the cold or starvation, for his head was full of the traditions of kidnapping. He had his own explanations as to how some of the dead bodies that lay in the dissecting-room of the College came there. 'I wouldn't go near the College,' he told me one day; 'no, not if you were to give me'—he paused for a moment, and thought of something fabulous—'a pound.' Once, he declared, he had been enticed by a few pence to carry a message into the dangerous region. It was dusk, and a shimmer of moon made the air mysterious. As he came up to the walls of the College his attention was caught by a carriage that swept up the middle of the road, drawn by two impetuous horses. Seated in the carriage were two men, 'foreign-looking,' he said, and dark, with long hiding beards. They had shining eyes, and, when they smiled, their teeth gleamed with a preternatural whiteness. One obtained from the whispered words of Micky a vision of Oriental potentates, cruel and indolent, turbaned and heavy with jewels. At sight of the boy their eyes had apparently met in

a look of understanding. Calling upon the coachman to stop, they descended sharply, and came over in the direction of Micky. Luckily, he realised, as in a flash, the hideousness of their purpose. 'I run and I run and I run,' he told me, his thin shoulders gathered up with the horror of the memory, 'and them after me.' Up one street and down another they pursued him, and he fled from them on his bare feet round the square, shod effectually enough with his fears. 'And the curious thing about it was,' he recalled with a shudder, 'their feet made no noise.' Certainly, if I had had Micky's experience, I should be chary of being seen walking too near the College myself. As he brought his tale to an end he rattled his bones in a final shiver. 'No,' he said under his breath, staring timidly into vacancy, 'not for a—poun'-note.' Recovering himself, he looked up at me, the serpentine twists coming back into his lips. 'Any way,' he declared stoutly, '*you're* not a medical student.' And he held out his hand.

He distrusted Catholics passionately. 'You may like them,' he said, 'but you never know when they will turn on you.' An imaginative boy, he had absorbed a foolish story that is often heard in the North of Ireland, and related it as something out of his own experience. Once he had loved a Catholic boy. They had lived together pleasantly as friends.

Unhappily, the Catholic fell ill, and lay upon his death-bed. Sending for Micky, he uttered solemn words of warning. 'Micky,' he said, 'never you take up with a Catholic again. For, friend and all as you are, many's the dark night I could have felt it in my heart to put a knife in you just for the sake of my religion.' Indeed, knives were drawn on more than one occasion by different boys on the pavement. Fortunately, however, little important blood was shed.

Micky himself was a sufficiently earnest Protestant to go to any extreme if he might extirpate Popery. One night I found him kicking his heels restively under a lamp, and grinding his teeth, as a great noise of music and shouting came on the wind from a distance. Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon were, I believe, just then addressing a crowd from a wagonette a few streets off. 'What's troubling you?' I asked Micky, for he was too much engrossed in his thoughts even to beg. He thrust his hands into his pockets, and lifted up his shoulders. 'I was thinking,' he said bitterly, 'if I had only a few grains of sand, and could get a hold of them trumpets, I could soon stop them playing them Fenian tunes.' He walked along by my side sunk in meditation. 'If I could even as much as get a stone thrown before they seen me!' he broke out suddenly. I expressed my astonishment that he was not round among the

crowd, even as a spectator. He shook his head derisively. 'Sure, if I was found there, they would murder me,' he said. After that we had some kind of theological argument, and, with his back finally against a wall, Micky declared against the Catholic religion as the sheerest idolatry. Cornered by some question of mine, he appealed from me to the Bible. 'The Bible says so,' he declared, doggedly. 'Where?' I asked. 'Oh, somewhere, anywhere; I don't know!' he cried, scratching his head, and then waving his hand in the air. He admitted afterwards that he had never read the Bible, had never so much as held one in his hands. 'But it's against idols. I know that much,' he declared, shaking his head like an oracle. He promised that, if I would bring him a Bible, he would read it, and I often intended to put one in my pocket and take it down to him. But somehow or other I always forgot it. I often wonder if Micky still continues to live out of charity with his neighbours, and I feel as though I deserved to bear the guilt of his hatred. I wonder, too, if he fulfilled either of the ambitions of his boyhood—to be a member of a Protestant flute band, and to be a soldier in a red coat.

I am afraid, however, he was a beggar by temperament, a lover of liberty with its uniform of tatters. Some good-hearted man found him em-

ployment in a mill, and dressed him in a rough suit, and shod him with boots. For a time Micky even crept into the back seat of a church on Sunday evenings, and, when I met him, dilated with a show of heartiness on the pleasures of being honest and respectable. He assured me that he could scarcely endure the thought of the days in which he had been out in the cold and the rain, begging. One Sunday morning, during the church hour, I was going for a walk over the waste-lands near the ship-building yards. I found two boys leaning against a wall of corrugated iron, and keeping their eyes fixed intently on a bucket that stood upside down at a little distance. One of the boys held a string, and this was attached to a piece of stick that propped up one side of the bucket, leaving a space between the rim and the ground. It was one of those primitive contrivances by which boys attempt to trap linnets. I looked suddenly at the boy who held the end of the string, and his mouth went into whimsical curls. It was Micky; Micky, barefooted and in rags again; Micky, with the dirty face and the pattern of cuts showing. 'Sure,' said he, with a little blush and a shrug, when I inquired into the reason of his downfall, 'you couldn't have stood it. Man,' he said, lifting his chin and feeling his throat with his fingers, 'the dust come up and choked you.' He looked at me narrowly, to see if I believed him. 'I would

have died in thonder,' he declared, thinking of the mill. Overhead, in the spaces of the sun, white gulls were flying, and I was breathing into my lungs a clean wind that was blowing from large and murmurous seas. I could not doubt Micky's wisdom. Certainly, it was better to be trapping linnets out in the sunlight than to wear boots and go into a mill and learn to be honest and respectable. I gave the boy a penny, and so set the seal of my approval on his wicked ways.

Hibernia Rediviva.

SOME time ago I went to Toome, a cross-roads village sitting on the edge of Lough Neagh, where the Bann slides into it, old and silver and silent. When I arrived, the Feis of the Country of Owen was in progress. Every part of Ireland almost has its Feis in these days, and hither come the men and women from the hills and river-banks, some striving to catch the last strains of the swan-song of an Ireland that is in the act of death, and others intent upon hearing the more cheerful and lark-like music of a new and beautiful Ireland that is in the act of being born. One meets here antiquaries, hoary and hobbling, and loving the native language only for the flavour of its roots. Mixed with them, lurch young men, their hands in their pockets and caps set well back on their skulls, who speak Irish because it is sweet and homely on their lips, and full of variety as an Irish day. As one approached Toome, squeezed in a narrow wooden box made to look like a railway-carriage, one could never have guessed at the great doings

that were afoot. One by one, crooked men had stumbled into the carriage, bearing crooked sticks and with crooked rags of beard drooping from their chins. There was a certain grand wild air about them, with their irresponsible, soiled tail-coats and their hats of bygone shapes and ages. One realised that they would be great men in a fight, but one felt that straitened means and a potato diet had stolen away from them the dreams for which alone a man goes out and fights gloriously. A huge fellow, leaning on a stick that stood sheer between his knees, droned out in a monotone—the monotone that always comes from living too long with the silence of open nature—a tale of an uneven battle between some friends of his and the police. Inquisitive and strange-eyed like children, the others bent forward to catch the story. One of them, a red pumpkin of a man, whose goods lay on the rack above him, tied in a red spotted handkerchief, chuckled delightedly as each point was reached in the story's progress. A young man beside me, hatted like a student from Paris and with memories in his eyes, drew out a pipe and a box of matches. 'I see,' said a neighbour, smiling and tapping him on the knee, 'that you don't use Irish matches.' The young man smiled back as he puffed a flame into his pipe. 'No,' he said, 'I follow Swift's advice, who told the Irish to burn everything English except the coals'; and

he showed an English name on the back of the match-box. The crooked men with the crooked sticks threw a perplexed glance at the young man, as though attempting to get at the heart of the new argument. Gathered in their lips were smutty clay pipes, mutilated as to the shank, and clouds of glory mounted in a sudden path of sunlight above their marvelling heads.

Toome was overspread with clouds of a different sort when I arrived there. Soft and pervasive, a greyness moved between the green fields and the sun, and the roads lay deep in a garnish of mud. One became aware of a shouting in the village, a hoarse and voluble shouting, and one wondered if, after all, this could be the voice of new Ireland. As one drew nearer the cross-roads, however, one recognised that it was the clamour of the old world, mumping for pennies at the heels of the new, and shrieking the grand quality of its dulse and its monstrous yellow man, its roped football and its rifle range, its cheap cakes and its fairings. In the middle of the road, a girl whose loose tangles of hair showed under her shawl of applegreen, stood in huge boots, and ground 'Down at the Old Bull and Bush' out of a piano organ. She seemed beautiful, and had brown and simple eyes. She was an Italian in a striped skirt, and she spoke English with a grave Belfast accent. Some feet away, a couple of old ballad-singers, beshawled

and snuff-stained, shook their grey hairs and their withered cheeks, as they piped a barbarous tune. One of them had a blackened eye; the other a hand claw-like in its desire of gain; and as they stood there, empty husks of life that may once have been sweet and beautiful, one moved away gladly to the new Ireland, aflutter with its green badges, gay in the return of its speech, and loud with songs that came out of the rivers and the light before civilisation had made men barbarous. A handful of pipers swept down the road, mighty proud of themselves and the tunes they were playing. Out of a field came a troop of boys, glowing and sweating and dangerous with their hurling sticks. Close by, a number of wooden platforms rose from the grass, and a tumult of farmers and gentlefolk, of pleasant-faced enthusiastic girls, and students, and labourers, and clergymen, stood around on the soaked earth and clapped their hands as a song was well sung or the steps of a dance neatly executed. For here was a Hellenic festival; contests of music, of sport, of what not. Child vied with child in lilting an old country tune into the wind. A tall, thin boy, with medals on his chest, who had travelled many miles from the sea, showed that he could whistle an Irish air better than all his inland-bred rivals. In dancing, too, he excelled, as another excelled in singing, or in story-telling, or in

playing the fiddle. A red priest in a Trilby hat announced the names of the prize-winners from the stage to the wet-footed and happy crowd. In the last competition of the day, a company of shy boys and pert mites of girls came up so that it might be seen which of them was dressed in the most winning and simple way. A long shed covered an exhibition of local industries. Here a strange old woman, her face palsied beyond all power of laughing, walked up and down before some dusty hand-looms, moaning over the days when weaving was an art and cloth was made that could last a lifetime.

In the evening, we all went over the river and down a side-path to the Temple of Liberty. The Temple of Liberty is a ruin, a mortar-faced affair set in a field among trees. Once a man lived in this part of the country who believed that all men should have liberty to express their opinions without being knocked on the head for it. Consequently he bequeathed to his countrymen this now shattered building, whose title in full is the Temple of Liberty, Learning, and Select Amusement. Over the entrance are many curious busts, Grattan's and Cobden's and Kosciusko's. On one side is the ill-modelled image of a dog, all body and no legs, labelled 'Watchfulness.' On the other side a lamb, with tin ears sprouting from its head (one of them a lop ear), looks inno-

cently down over the word 'Harmlessness.' Inside, through the holes of the roof, swallows come and beat perplexedly against the windows. Old and highly coloured frescoes, misrepresenting all the known gods and goddesses from Aphrodite to Robert Burns, are falling in flakes from the panels of the damp walls. Comically housed like this, the people from the hills and the river banks sat with alert ears and eyes and hands, and listened to merry tunes or to the laments for the old heroes, laments that are songs less of despair than of battle and triumph. Here and there, a fine bit of singing was greeted with a Gaelic shout. On the next evening, a company of young players from Belfast came down to the Temple, and won an even more lavish greeting for the drama that is now growing, like a fruit exposed to the sun, all over Ireland.

Back in the hotel, a piano was beaten with power. Crowds moved with a great confusion of tongues in the hall, and called helplessly for sleeping-room. In one parlour, three young men solemnly and mournfully sang 'Who fears to speak of Ninety-eight?' from a single ballad-sheet. Elsewhere a silver-toned boy was busy upon a song in which an anti-Irish Marquis of Waterford was pictured 'cleaning up the devil's delph' in a region better suited to him than Ireland. Late into the night, everybody sang and laughed and

prophesied with delight about the Ireland that was going to be. Gradually the silence came. Those who had glasses before them drained them in a last toast. On sofas, on chairs, on floors, men looked around for a place where they might pass the night.. One brave youth stood in the hall and slept. He was still standing, sleeping on his feet, when the earliest of us came down for breakfast the next morning.

Riots.

IN the morning, a girl on a white horse had led a tumultuous crowd out of a square near the middle of the town. Behind her, a long line of banners streamed, flagrant and green and golden-edged, in the sun and wind. Flutes and drums and brazen instruments sent up one tune after another as the hosts marched by, firm of limb and daring of aspect. Every one almost seemed to be wearing a sash, green and gold-fringed, and some of the bandsmen had the romantic appearance of the actors in a costume play. Obviously, however, the day's work was a very real and earnest thing to them. The eyes of most of them were shadowed with an almost bitter earnestness: they were so keen, so threatening, that one thought of them as of knives with sharp edges. Every one was alive, tense-sinewed, stepping out of himself, as it were, with enthusiasm. It was a day on which a battle had been fought many, many years ago—a battle in which brave men had died carelessly and gladly because they knew they were

dying for Ireland. Consequently, the Nationalists of the town looked on it as a just thing to pay to their memory this tribute of the gold and green of flying banners, of the silver and gold and music of a thousand instruments.

There is a field near the town in which processions like this often gather, but I did not go along with the bands so far. In the afternoon, however, I went out to meet them on their return march, for there was a rumour that they would be attacked by the way. Some two miles from the heart of the town, the Nationalist quarter lay open to assault on the edge of a long, low strip of bog-land. Here was a vulnerable point upon which earnest men and boys who did not believe in Home Rule might direct their forces. Evidently the authorities had taken note of this; for a red bank of earth which projected from the roadside into the meadows was already dotted with the figures of soldiers on my arrival. In the sweltering sun, they were moving this way and that, their rifles stacked and their bayonets catching the light. In a line with them, guarding a lower gulf of meadow, a belt of policemen in plain clothes, armed with huge sticks, lay at their ease in the grass. Already, from afar and from many parts, the Protestant boys were gathering across the bogs, and comforting themselves in companies with lively tunes. Each of them was provided

with a stick, a rude branch of a tree taken up on the way across the meadows. The meadows stretched out in a long blackish-green flatness, broken here and there by the remnants of a hedge, or the beginnings of a new road. Busy as bees, the Protestants seemed to be gathering close round a leader, and at the end of a harangue they would break loose from him with a cheer. Suddenly, they formed themselves in the order of an army about to set forth to battle. Each youth in the ranks—for the men do not riot in any numbers until the blood of the town is up—fixed his cap on the top of his stick, and with sticks hoisted in the air, terrible as a host of spears, they sang the English national anthem like a challenge. Having done so much, they shouldered arms, and, turning right-about, went off at a rapid pace parallel to the road. Wheeling again, they came forward, a black and solid body, straight to where the policemen with the ash-plants were lying in the grass. One policeman rose as though with a yawn; another bestirred himself; a third awoke into the blaze of the sun, and sauntered forward into the dangerous face of battle. Sometimes, the lesser boys would show an inclination to run at the approach of these monsters, sure and slow and cast in the mould of heroes. As a rule, however, the ragamuffin army waited. One of the plain-clothes-men, as

they are called, addressed intimately, and with gestures, the Protestant leaders, and the conference wound up with cheers, a roaring of 'Rule Britannia,' and a retreat in order. Once an officer of the army went out in his red coat, and attempted to persuade the boys to retire. They welcomed him as one of themselves. They buzzed round him like bees at swarming-time. They seemed as though eager to set him on their shoulders; cheering and singing and bellowing oaths of loyalty, they finally sent him out from among them like a friend. They stayed in the meadow, however, and gathered again in the order of battle. The enemy had not arrived yet.

By the edge of the road a thickening host of Nationalist men and women was assembling. On the sun-dried clay of a slope a company of little girls nestled, a baby hidden here and there in the folds of their shawls, and sent their eyes angrily scanning the young fellows in the meadow. Freeing their arms, they would shake their tiny fists in answer to some shout of loyalty, and, when the Protestant singing was done, they always had a retort ready for it in a song of defiance. One of these songs, cruelly enough, went to the tune of 'The Orange Lily,' a song sacred to the Protestant heart. They sang another, very fiercely and threateningly, to the air of 'Killarney,' and the burden of it was this :

Ra-di-daddy, we'll have Home Rule yit!

Ra-di-daddy, we'll have Home Rule yit!

Ra-di-daddy, we'll have Home Rule yit!

Ra-di-daddy, in the morning!

Given forth with spirit and tailing off in a screech of cheering, it sounded very well. Mingled with this came the screaming of countless women, who flung back their shawls and lifted their fists and insulted the Protestants on the score of their years. Some of the men ground their teeth in an ineffectual bitterness. A man beside me—a threadbare, sickly, broken reed of a man—stood with his hands in his pockets and cursed and spat at his leisure. 'By the holy God,' he would mutter to himself in a kind of grumbling montone, chewing a quid of tobacco all the time, 'if only the peelers would let us at you, you young whelps, we'd soon make short work of you.' Then his voice, too, would rise on a wave of querulous shouting. 'Away home out of this!' he cried, in a voice that was drowned in the general murmurs. 'Away to hell out of that, you dirty blackguards, you!' He turned to me suddenly, with the look of a demon in his eyes. 'If we could get at them!' he said. 'Ah,' I agreed, 'if we only could!' Suddenly, however, the first overflow of the procession came, dusty and hoarse and battle-hungry, down the road.

Every soldier picked up his rifle, and waited his

orders alertly. Every policeman clutched his ash-plant tightly, and squared his shoulders in readiness. Like briny waves, the Nationalist crowd was breaking upon us, and the Protestant forces, making a sudden dart, had turned the right flank of the military and were within stone-throwing distance of the enemy. The air for the moment was black with stones and rivets, aimed in a vague kind of faith through a cluster of trees. Pushing this way and that, the Nationalists sought some point at which they might be able to break through the defence of the soldiers. The police had, in the meantime, charged and routed the stone-throwers. A few horse-soldiers arrived, and all was bustle and clamour, with bands playing furiously, insultingly, and banners waved in anger. Suddenly, the soldiers were called on to defend a gap or hoarding through which the Nationalist forces were pouring. The soldiers drove the civilians back on to the road, and stood ludicrously ducking their heads and warding off the stones with their rifles. At a lower point a rushing tide of Nationalists had hurried down a side street and gained admission to the meadows, and were off helter-skelter after the flying Protestants, with stones, like clusters of starlings, rushing through the wind. There was an order to fix bayonets and charge. Civilians could not abide the advance of cold steel calmly. They fell back at a run, chased

by the red-coats. Behind the red-coats, however, the Orange youths took heart. As a kind of support, they followed the military, hurling the abundance of their ammunition upon them and the Nationalists indiscriminately. The soldiers turned, and dived with their bayonets after the new enemy, the Nationalists also wheeling round and following both soldiers and Orangemen in the gallop across the meadow. To and fro hurried the soldiers, always with one party running from them and one running after them. It seemed as though there would be no end to this ludicrous and inconclusive warfare. At length a black mass of police came to the aid of the soldiers, and leaped among the Protestants with their batons. Guarded in the rear, the soldiers were now able to drive the Nationalists in an angry and helpless tumult out on the road. Stones still came intermittingly; challenges were shouted; a few last efforts were made at a sortie. Finally, the leaders of the procession prevailed on their followers to move their long banner-green forces down the road that led to the town. Sweating, inflamed, murmurous, they went after the roaring bands. Every street-mouth near the centre of the town had its gag of soldiers, dangerous and prepared. They were getting ready for the riots that they knew would begin in earnest after night-fall.

A Man with Opinions.

EVERY human being almost, as the caricaturists have perceived, challenges comparison with one of the birds or the beasts or the fishes. You could not look at William and keep the picture of a goat out of your head. This was probably due to the oblong rag of beard—a black beard turning grey—that fell from his chin. Perhaps, too, a certain precise narrowness about the nose, a calculating and not altogether generous look in the eyes (which were grey and half-closed against the stress of weather), had something to do with it. William also reminded you of a goat by his peculiar way of walking. He ambled along, as all agricultural labourers in his part of the country end by doing, a man of comfortable and unalterable paces, comically resigned to the present, ridiculously empty of any hope for the future. I learned to rely heavily on him as a child, and, in a measure, to love him, because he had three or four of the farm-horses under his control. In the evening, of course, these had to be led out and

watered at the pond, or let loose in the fields, and it was then the pride of my life to sit perched up on the back of one of them, though at every jolt the ridge-bone of the animal seemed to be cutting into me like a knife. Without a saddle, without a bridle, I was able to hold on by the rope of the halter—like grim death, as we used to say—and to imagine danger where there was none. Grant but an imaginative rider, and your splay-footed cart-horse becomes as capable of perilous things, as uncontrollably magnificent, as any Starlight in the stables of adventurous fiction.

I think that William himself had little stomach for adventures among horses. It lessened my good opinion of him afterwards to realise that he would have felt more at home with the cows. When I knew him first he deceived me by the air of bravado with which he lurched about the stable. I had never before heard a man swear so profusely at dumb animals. As he walked past the row of the horses' tails he kept up a constant grumble of violent words. Sometimes he did not even trouble to articulate words: he seemed satisfied so long as he made sufficient noise with his throat. He was a man who growled, as it were, at the top of his voice, like a traditional ogre trying to frighten children. Before he would go up to the heads of any of the animals he beat them heavily on the rump, shouting out his curses at them.

'Stand, mare! stand!' he would roar angrily to some poor beast that had not sufficient spirit even to think of rebelling. 'Quiet there!' he flashed out, thumping her on the sides as she stumbled round to find out what was the matter. He cursed the hay as he threw it into the trough in front of her. He cursed the empty bucket that he brought back with him. In the end one of the horses must have found this sort of thing offensive. Lifting a heel, it let fly, and sent William in a heap against the stable wall. William lay up for a week or two, and came back then, with murder in his eyes; but he became more judicious in his choice of animals to beat and swear at.

Despite his cowardice, he was an excellent companion. Like many cowards, he seemed to be constantly impressed with the humour of his position in the world. Standing on the top of a load of hay, with the pitchforks thrusting hither and thither on all sides of him, or wading amid the filth and stench of a half-emptied flax-hole, he was always remarkable for his goatish twinkle. He laughed at his neighbours; he laughed at the girls and women; and he talked, and talked. I do not remember much of what he said, for there never was a great deal of sense in it. Indeed, I sometimes think he may have talked for the same reason that made him curse in the stables—that he

was a man trying to escape from timidity, self-consciousness, and all that family of vices. Certainly he was eaten up with self-consciousness as with a disease. If you did not raise a laugh at his jokes, you would see a swift passage of pain over his face before he recovered himself, and turned his appeal to a more generous neighbour. His idea of a joke, like that of many men in these parts, was of something with a sensual flavour. He liked to cast sidelong glances at some woman working near him in the field, and to taunt her with some dubious event in her married history. He also leered, with all the consciousness that he was acting with an audience before him, at the young, unmarried girls, and thrust them, willy-nilly, into the arms of boys that were not yet past blushing. In his eyes the world was a place for marrying. That seemed to be the sole duty of man—and the sole pleasure. It was the affairs of sex that gave to life its ultra-comical turn. And yet, despite all his indiscretions of speech, William was himself, I am sure, a man of inflexible purity of habit. He had married a wife years before, and there was never a stain on his loyalty. His wife, indeed, entered more heartily than anybody into his jokes. She led a chorus of laughter among the women, and did not laugh the less boisterously if the jokes were of a rough and homely shape.

I think some of William's indecency must have sprung direct from his reading; for, apart from the Bible, he knew no books but Robert Burns. It was from him I first learnt that Burns was less than a perfect man. Before that I had revered poets as pure, ethereal creatures, to be worshipped next to God, and I was not at first able to laugh with William. As for him, he gloated on the sins of men. He had not the courage to commit sins for himself, but he enjoyed a kind of vicarious wickedness by letting his mind brood on the evil lives of his fellows. Naturally, a man of so subtle an intellect was a theologian—only in a broad sense, however. He believed in a heaven for himself and his family, and a hell for the majority of other people. He believed, also, that it was a sin worthy of eternal punishment to play a musical instrument or to sing a hymn at the Sabbath meeting. A few years ago a great controversy raged in Ulster as to whether this view was justified. In the heat of the excitement William forgot his indecencies; he almost forgot his cowardice. 'Hymns!' he would cry, fixing some broader-minded neighbour with an angry glare. 'Who wrote them? Tell me that, now. It was men, wasn't it? Ay, athenises, Roman Catholics, boozers, and worse! Ah, man! will you be quiet, or talk sense!' 'But who was it wrote the psalms, William?' 'You know

well enough. It was God wrote the Psalms.' 'Oh!' cried the other, with a malicious twinkle; 'I thought David might have had a hand in them.' 'David,' replied William, sternly, 'was nothing but what God made him; he was an instrument; he was inspired.' 'I'm thinking, William, may-be he was not so much better nor an atheist or a Roman Catholic. Did ye ever hear of a man they called Uriah?' The speaker himself was an Episcopalian and a notorious evil-liver. William's eyes became like lances: he rose to double his usual height; in a flash of temper he lifted a pitchfork in a striking attitude. The Episcopalian was a big fellow, however, and William never believed in taking risks. He turned away without having struck a blow, but he had the satisfaction of hating the other in his heart. The only thing that I ever knew to disturb him as deeply as the question of church music was the fear of Home Rule. Coward and all that he was, I believe he would have gone out and shouldered a gun rather than have permitted—such was his idea of Home Rule—the Catholics to rule over him. I once asked him about Gladstone. 'I'd like to see him as far in hell,' he said bitterly, 'as you can see a white cow in a moss.' Well, it is good to be able to love or hate anything heartily. William's opinions were almost always wrong, but I am sure he got out of them a great deal of sinful pleasure.

The Priest by the Sea.

HIS was a figure carved on the Gladstonian model. Erect, self-assured in his gaze, a little vain in his manner of shaking hands with ordinary people, he moved up and down the streets of the little seaside town, an autocrat to the heels. A Presbyterian minister, he claimed all the privileges of a distinct caste, and, even in the kisses he gave children, he manifested a certain priestly condescension. In his youth he had felt the beginnings of love, and his eyes hung on a girl who had sufficient of the divine enthusiasm to enjoy dancing. Out of the beautiful happiness of the girl came the sword that made an end of his lover's hopes. He laid the alternatives before her with an honourable clearness. Either she must abjure dancing and so win his and Heaven's approval, or she might continue her foolishness, in which case she must be prepared to part with a lover and the good graces of God. Bravely enough, she resolved to consecrate herself to delight, and a crusty, sandy-haired bachelor went out into the world and gave himself up to preaching with an exaggerated earnestness.

His hair was sprinkled with grey by the time I came to know him, and with the years he had acquired a certain grotesque dignity. Bewhiskered and with a nose of the Roman style, he looked as though a deal of starch had gone to his making. Stumping along with the aid of a stout stick, he gave himself the airs of a peacock or a village Cæsar. Of one thing, indeed, he was entitled to be proud. He had the cheeks of a seaman, bronzed and hale and virile. Every morning of the year, even in the white of winter, he carried his towel down to the sea and swam with all his sinews out into the deep water. This habit did not leave him until near the end of his life, and it is to the credit of his swimming that he brought more than one half-drowned person out of the waves. Living so stoically, he seemed young compared with the number of his years. This number he ever kept a profound secret. "I'm over seventeen and under seventy-seven," was his constant answer—given with eyes that had a sea-twinkle—to all who questioned him too curiously on the subject. Finally, however, came the day that closed the fiftieth year of his ministry. He deemed himself worth the honour of a jubilee, and hung bunting recklessly in front of his black house and the church beside it. And calculating people no longer found in his age a mystery.

If he was accustomed to address his equals from

the superior level of conscious merit, he showed an equal disinclination to stoop in the presence of Heaven itself. Not that he maintained the stiff-backed attitude of one of his brethren in the Church, of whom it used to be said that, in his prayers, he condescended to address the Almighty. Rather, he found in God one with whom he could converse on terms of something like familiarity—the familiarity of a dependent and respectful younger brother. Especially did his prayers ring with a note of intimacy. In pressing some petition, he had a way of bringing in a scripture-text as a kind of evidence in support of his claim. He rarely gave the text in full, however, breaking off after the first word or two, as though, between two who knew their Bible so well as himself and God, a more extended quotation would have been superfluous. For example, he might be calling for a blessing on a new church. He would begin, gravely, nasally: “Except the Lord do build the house,” and then brush the rest of the sentence aside with an “and so on, and so on,” that was rich in suggestions of confidential relationship. One of the stories that were told most frequently about him showed him turning the same delightfully infantine front to the skies. He was a despotic lover of the Sabbath, and when steam trams were introduced into the town, he struggled with prayer, and in less measured ways,

against their being run on Sundays. The children of darkness won, however, and the town became lively on the Sabbath with the conductor's warning bell, and the scream and rattle of wheels as they rounded the corner by the gate of the church. This seemed only to add a zest to the minister's praying. Grim and dangerous of aspect, he besought a gift of Divine light for those who so heedlessly defiled the sanctity of the Sabbath. One Sunday morning he was in the thick of an impassioned prayer, covering the old ground and inveighing against "those devil's engines that break in upon the peace and rest of Thy holy day," when one of the trams came within hearing, like a retort from the devil himself, and for the moment all but swallowed the minister's utterance with the cry of its wheels. This threw him into an ecstasy of exasperation. "There, Lord," he cried bitterly, yet with the triumph of a man who has proved his case, "now Thou canst hear them for Thyself!"

There are many other instances of this direct simplicity of his, this whole-hearted confidence in the nearness and goodwill of God. He is to be praised for one thing: he never approached his Maker with the ungainly circumlocutions with the help of which most clergymen avoid mentioning anything so secular as a man's or a town's name. If he wished to bring James McMath under the Divine notice, he called the man James McMath,

and had done with it. Sometimes the effect of this custom was a little ludicrous. I heard him one day praying for the final salvation of two children whom he had just baptised. "And, Lord," he besought, "when the span of their life is ended, do Thou take Thy little Matilda and Thy little Jane into Thine everlasting arms." Once his passion for names led him into difficulties, out of which only the most cunning presence of mind brought him in safety. He had persuaded a clergyman from a neighbouring parish to preach for him, and this necessitated a drive on the stranger's part of several miles. Naturally, this called for mention in the prayer in which, according to the custom, the home minister called down a blessing on the sermon that was to follow. "And now," he began, "we beseech Thee that Thou wilt pour an abundant blessing upon the words of our brother, Mr. Patterson, who has driven so far on this beautiful sunny day from——" But here his memory suddenly gave way. He could not for the life of him think of the name of the parish in which his friend ministered. A man running for his life, who finds himself up against the wall of a blind alley, could scarcely be in a more awkward predicament. The old fellow's confidence again carried the day, however. "Lord," he confessed, heroically unabashed, "I forget for the moment the name of the place at which our brother

ministers. But it does not matter. Thou who rememberest all things dost not forget it."

If he had something of the simplicity of a child, he had also a little of the child's selfishness and petulant temper. Some declared, too, that he was not without a tinge of meanness. They said that, in a luxury of generous feeling, he had one day invited two ladies, who had flattered him, to go up to the manse. They had declared their love for flowers, and he had gallantly laid his garden at their service. When they arrived, however, he gave them an abundance of talk, but said nothing about the flowers. As they were leaving, he stooped down to a flower bed, and then, with a tender, fatherly air, fixed a nasturtium in the breast of each of them. This is a story that at least passed for true with the friend from whom I heard it. I am afraid, indeed, the man's want of open-handedness was not altogether mythical. Towards the end of his days, some neighbours were foolish enough to use their influence with a compliant Government, and flattered his vanity by getting a place for him on the local bench of magistrates. A priest in the beginning of his name, a judge at the tail of it, he began to walk about with his head in the stars. One day, a sly old beggar-woman accosted him at the gates of his nouse, hoping that so glorious a person would be beyond grudging her the price of a half-ounce of snuff. But he

walked past her with his head very much in the air, and refused to turn or attend for all her cajolings and reproaches. Seeing that her quest was hopeless, she suddenly changed from the attitude of the cringing suppliant to that of the too candid friend. She called him by this name and by that. Raising her voice in a bitterness of denunciation, she finally used the word "skin-flint," and spoke of the day when the devil would have him as of a day that was rapidly approaching—a gross and immodest reference to his latter end. Tempestuously aroused, he suddenly laid aside his quietness, and, entering into the heat of words with her, was at last so vitally inflamed that he put her into the hands of a policeman who was going by. As a magistrate, he went to the Court-house on the next day, and, his rage being not yet abated, he had her whipped off to gaol for a term of days. This gave some offence to a number of people with a sense of humour, and the case was mentioned at Dublin Castle, with the result that the eloquent beggar-woman was set walking the streets again. It would be unfair to derive from this the idea that the man was without human considerateness. He came to his death some years later, and, as he lay dying, he made a sign to those near him to stoop down and hear his last request. This concerned the date of his funeral. He wished it to be arranged so as not to clash with the day on

which his chief elder was accustomed to pay his weekly visit to market. Having made his request, the eccentric old fellow seemed to nod his thanks, and contentedly sighed out the little breath that was left in him.

Myles the Slasher.

It is not everyone who has heard of Myles the Slasher. Possibly even among the ten or twelve thousand men and women who wandered into the village of Finnea on Sunday to do honour to his memory, only a few score knew anything definite about him except his name. His name, and the fact that once, something after the pattern of Horatius Cocles, he fought a good fight on the Bridge of Finnea.

Finnea is a little village in an inland corner of County Westmeath. It consists of a single street that runs sharply up a hill from the bridge where the fight took place to a heavy-gated market-house. On one side of the street the houses are roofed with straw; on the other with dreary slate.

As we approached the village on the day of the great meeting we drove under a series of primitive green arches, for the people had stretched ropes across the road and had twined round them a profusion of laurel branches. Finnea awaited its

invaders, the people expectant, the publicans watchful, the women who sold gooseberries blessing God for the warmth of the day, and a ballad-maker, lank and bearded, thrusting his way hither and thither through the crowd and selling a composition of his own on the hero of the hour.

Band upon band stepped into the village, uproarious with drum and fife. Green flags advanced, filling the air triumphantly. To the tune of 'A Nation Once Again,' portraits of Robert Emmet, of Daniel O'Connell, of other great dead heroes, were borne up the street. Suddenly a new band came within view. Before it, four men rode in on ponies, shouting and waving their sticks jubilantly. Between the ears of each pony was placed a fern leaf or a piece of green ribbon. It was as though a tide of sound and colour were pouring into the village. Gradually you felt swamped and suffocated. You found yourself carried hither and thither in the turbulent throng, and on all sides faces eager with enthusiasm, eyes that flashed like bayonets, surrounded you.

You knew before long that you were in the presence of a new Ireland, an Ireland strangely awake and vivid. Amid the crowd of priests and laymen on the little white platform stood Mr. Bulmer Hobson, a young man, at once curiously boyish and curiously Napoleonic in appearance,

who had come down from the North to preach to the people the gospel of national self-reliance, the gospel of Sinn Féin.

The meeting opened with a few words from a priest in spectacles, a thin old man, with a face a little withered, and marked with gentle thoughts. It was clear that he was loved by the crowd, for strong men reached their arms out to him and cried, 'You're a grand man, Father!' at intervals during his speech. It was a mild speech, calling on them to love their country, to keep the Irish language alive, to be temperate in their lives. 'And I hope,' he wound up, 'there will be nothing revolutionary in the speeches that are to follow.' An M.P., Mr. Lawrence Ginnell by name, then came forward, his silk hat looking strangely out of place. He had little sharp blue eyes, a reddish beard, a quick nervous manner, and showed himself capable of a certain passion. 'I have never,' he declared, 'set any limits to the objects at which the Irish people may justly aim. I am willing to adopt any methods, so long as they are moral and feasible.' Neither the priest nor the M.P., however, had expressed the spirit of the crowd, or had flashed back that wild enthusiastic light that was burning in so many thousand eyes. It was left to Mr. Hobson to do this. He stepped forward to the bar in front of the platform with an air calm and resolute and almost indolent.

No sooner had he spoken his first words, 'Men and women of Ireland,' however, than you knew that he had the crowd in his grip. He reminded them that they were faced by the same enemies whom Myles the Slasher had died fighting. Like a musician developing a theme, he called up name after name of the men who had given their lives for Ireland—Myles, and Owen Roe, and Wolfe Tone, and Robert Emmet—and at the end of each sentence a shrill shout went up, like a shout of battle, and the listeners found themselves filled with a new enthusiasm, as one might fill a jar with water. I shall never forget their joy when the speaker held up before them, as the only ideal worthy of a brave man's striving after, the establishment of an independent Irish nation. Every hat was lifted; every throat was shouting; arms were thrust up and forward toward the platform, as though the crowd longed to take the speaker to its bosom. 'Oh, there's nobody like the Fenians!' somebody called up to him.

As regards ways and means, Mr. Hobson's message was simple. 'Rely upon yourselves alone,' he told his hearers. 'Do not look to a foreign Parliament for salvation. Support your own industries. Speak your own language. Stop drinking, and thereby you will deprive England of several millions of yearly revenue. Do not enlist in England's army and police, and so you will weaken

the forces that are arrayed against you.' It was the first time the Sinn Féin policy had been expounded in the midlands of Ireland, and the midlands drank it in as the earth after a long drought drinks in rain. The success of the Sinn Féin movement is a curious proof that idealism will never die among the Irish people.

The M.P. came forward on the wave of enthusiasm that had just been created, and declared that he endorsed all that had been said. Then came a red priest with a good-humoured enthusiastic face. 'Isn't it pitiful,' he said in the most persuasive of brogues, 'that we should be here commemorating Myles the Slasher in the language of John Bull, in the language of Oliver Cromwell, in the language of the hereditary enemies of the Irish race?' The crowd bubbled with delight at the point he had made. 'God and nature,' he went on, leaning over the bar, 'intended the English language for the Englishman. God and nature intended the Irish language for the Irishman. But God and nature never intended the English language for the Irishman. And because, in speaking the English language, you are fighting against God and against nature, is it any wonder your poor country is withering away?' It was an irresistible speech. It flowed so mellifluously, so kindly, with so persuasive a logic. When the young priest advised the people to

go and compel the clergy to put Irish in the schools and in the services of the church, they called down blessings upon him with laughter and cheers.

The meeting closed with a song in Irish from a little fair-haired boy, and the crowd could not have enough of it. Everything, however, must come to an end. Banners were unfurled in the sun; flutes were got ready. Strong men and beautiful women told each other that they had had the day of their lives. Murmurous as bees, delighted as children, they went out along the roads and across the fields, while the huge hot vault of the air filled once more with the strains of 'A Nation Once Again.'

ENGLISH

On Rogues and Vagabonds.

KING EDWARD VII. has distressed me bitterly. The edict banishing the rogue and the vagabond from the Royal parks has been issued, and I earnestly wish it could be withdrawn again. There is no imagining the Green Park without its herd of red-nosed and ill-clad idlers: the disappearance of those fine and aged prophets of laziness from the Hyde Park benches will leave Rotten Row a colonnade of mere wealth and respectability. And what has our friend the vagabond done to merit this recent decree of banishment? The worst that can be alleged against him is that he has a rooted detestation of washing. For better or worse we have entered on the soap age of the world's history, and we do not ask about a man's views on religion or the future of the British Empire if we are only sure he remembers his bath in the morning. The park idler, however, has no commerce with fashions that come and fade. He belongs to a race that made the world uneasy with its dreams long before soap had ever cor-

rupted the complexion of a pretty woman, or the cold bath had displaced the Bible as the secret of England's greatness: His forerunners through the centuries have faced themselves with the question, "What's the good of anything?" and invariably they have answered, "Nothing," with a heartiness that looked strange in their sleepy and humid eyes. That is the loafer's catechism. It is far from being the most unwise of the comments offered upon existence. Like the thorough-paced logician he is, however, the loafer has applied his creed in the sphere of soap and water, and, for his virtue, the gates of the King's parks have been closed against him. There are many fine gentlemen and ladies who have adopted the fellow's catechism in regard to matters even weightier, I think, than soap—to Christian morals, for instance, and poetry, and the stars. And, still, on a sunny afternoon, they drive round the Park with no policeman or ticket-puncher to come forward and push them from their stools.

The park vagrant is a man after my own heart. He is so ruthlessly sane, so cheerfully aloof from all those pettinesses which entangle and embitter the lives of most of us. Imagine a man free from the passion for dress and the vanity of appearances, having no ambition to mix in elegant society or to be Prime Minister or win the Derby or be a conscript soldier and die for the Empire. Never has

he been put in a cold sweat by the hope of writing a fine poem or of squaring the circle or hanging a picture in the Academy or being a judge, or anything so foolish. The mystery of pain and the other riddles that the Earth carries on her quietly-smiling lips he passes as "read," and has no further dealings with. He has no interest in the sickness of Consols or in French troubles at the Vatican or in the opinions of the Rev. R. J. Campbell. His tastes, indeed, and his concerns are of the simplest. They are more restricted even than Omar Khayyám's. The poet's jug of wine and loaf of bread he will accept as necessities, but he has no call for a book of verses, and, as for the notion of a woman singing to him in the shadow of his trees, she would only serve to disturb his sleep.

In his passion for sleep the vagrant permits himself to be carried away with something like religious abandonment. He had rather sleep than be Lord Mayor or a King; he turns himself into a kind of missionary of somnolence. On a day of warmth and heavy breezes the Green Park becomes the pleasantest dormitory in London. Buckingham Palace gazes over it with an ugly face, but that seems only to make the drowsing vagrants turn in their sleep and thank God that their own conversation is in so fair surroundings. On their green couches they have no need of

luxurious pillow or counterpane. They are rolled around the sun with a philosophy that has got beyond these things. Wrecks of men, with garments tattered and shining with grease, they are content with their plight, if they may only sleep undisturbed. The echo, purified nine times, of the battle London ever wages with itself in its net of streets stirs the vagrant to no interest. The noise of the armies of the rich being borne in their chariots down Piccadilly affects him less than the murmur of a fly's wing at his ear. There are no admirations, no excitements left to him. In the ordinary business of life he feels as much out of it as a greybeard at a pantomime. Work and play he despises alike, and wonders why the birds sing so strenuously when they might as easily be silent and asleep in the trees. Such heroism of sleepiness surely deserves a cross of honour. I love sleep myself, but a thousand hopes and fears take the heart from my passion, and weaken me to a sort of compromising cowardice. When the world has the opportunity, it, too, shows how universal the desire for sleep is. See how the good citizen nestles late and lazy under the blankets of a Sunday morning. If he had but the courage of his impulses he would lay aside his small vanities and hankerings after a good name and popularity, and go into the Green Park and sleep all day with the idlest of them. That host of fallen

angels, indeed, the snoring and placid company of park sleepers, wins its recruits more easily than the finest rigged of the King's regiments. One requires only to believe in Horace's maxim and admire nothing, and, however few inches one may be round the chest, one has already qualified as a soldier of sleepiness. And now, because these poor fellows have no time both to work and sleep, and have been bold enough to look on work as the more negligible of the alternatives, they are to be turned out of their old kingdom, while sheep remain there grazing. Oh, drooping and sad-visaged exiles, may you be prosperous on your new journey! May you reach greener and softer haunts of ease and oblivion, where your limbs may rest all day idly in a dreamless sleep!

The Revivalists in the West End.

DR. TORREY and Mr. Alexander have begun their fight with Satan in the West-End. One night during last week I visited the Albert Hall, and found many thousands of Londoners of the sort that cannot be amused seated in the many circles of the building. They were the kind of persons who regard the late Dr. Talmage as the flower of civilization and progress, and Plato as a filthy heathen. They believe quite honestly that "Horner's Penny Stories" are literature more edifying and spiritual than the novels of George Meredith or the poetry of Shelley. They and their families were in the Albert Hall, sabbatically black, sabbatically vacuous, sabbatically self-satisfied. Oh, those stolid and colourless Londoners! They sat, row behind row, and refused to flush into a rapture, or to clap their hands rejoicingly, no matter how vigorously Mr. Alexander stamped his foot or slapped the hymn-book with his palm or tortured the air with his agile body. A soldier here and there made a stain of red amongst the crowd. One or two office-boys showed in their hungry eyes mobile and retiring

hearts. Shop-girls had brought their lovers in a few instances—poor fellows who thought it unmanly to look religious, and attempted to hide their dread of being converted under an incessant sickly smile. One observed, too, the austere costume of a hospital nurse in some parts of the house—that nunnish costume that brings a note of sacredness even into the gallery of a music-hall or an evangelistic meeting. The majority of the people seemed to belong to the lower middle-classes, and were very plain to look at. They were weary with empty toil and empty thoughts and empty reading. Some of them were not interested because they were already converted. Others of them were dull, because they had come out to see a preacher of sensational and prophetic magnetism, and found instead a middle-sized, grey-bearded man in a frock-coat, who was impressive only in his threats. The best in this kind obtained one laugh. Mr. Alexander suddenly paused in his very American comments on a hymn. “Cast all your cares on Jesus,” he observed, with a business-like blandness. “That’s about the best cure for the blues ever invented.”

Mr. Alexander is the real interesting figure in the Albert Hall revival. I have seen nothing to compare with him for tirelessness, for good humour, for an easy flow of encouraging words, except those gentlemen who sell five-shilling gold watches or elixirs of life on gala-days in the pro-

vinces. Even an auctioneer scarcely woos his audiences with the same apparent industry and concern. Bald-browed and black-headed, clothed in a frock coat with restless flaps, he has the air of a business man who has been born with a good figure and has brought it to perfection with Saturday football and Sunday tramps. He struck me as having what is known as a pasty complexion, and beady eyes. Perhaps I ought to have said that he looks like not a business man so much as a clever solicitor. I cannot define the exact virtues that go to the making of a solicitor, but Mr. Alexander seems to me to possess them. When I entered the Albert Hall he was standing on a high red-covered box, set endways on the platform. Behind him choirs roared out a hymn. Beneath him a thousand plain faces stared and wondered. In front, gallery rose above gallery, well enough filled, and a few more plain faces peered down inquiringly from the far-away topmost corridor. Mr. Alexander, a tiny and whirling atom of black in so vast a space, cast hymn upon hymn tentatively at an unresponsive audience. Like the trainer of a choir, he took it in detachments—the boxes or the galleries or the floor of the house—and criticised each in turn with pleasant words or a head-shake and a smile. The scanty row leaning out of the corridor set up a piping, like the wail of a distant child, in answer to his demand for a burst of heart-felt singing.

He stole a queer look up at them, laughing. "What," he cried, "haven't you got any books up there?" With a resigned smile he swept round on the choir, a sudden windmill of arms. He had cried the first words of the Glory Song. The choir flashed at his nod and tumbled into singing, as though borne along before some irresistible gale. To change the metaphor, they seemed to cast out huge nets of exciting sound, adapted for catching the emotions of the lower middle-classes. As soon as Mr. Alexander judged that the nets were pretty well provided he silenced the choir with a gesture, and turned round to the audience with a sharp invitation to sing. Alas! his efforts resulted too often in a barren haul. Cold, placid, full of memories of the halfpenny Press, his audience refused to be trapped into an ardour. Insistently, almost heroically, he cast fresh bait to them; he wheedled them, he urged them—in his despair, he all but flirted with them. But it was of no use. The choir might rage, but Mr. Alexander imagined a vain thing if he thought that in the cold spaces of the Albert Hall he could light that evening a religious fire. So unenthusiastic was the atmosphere, indeed, that one might almost have gone off to sleep comfortably. In the end, defeated, exhausted, but good-humoured still, the tiny atom of black was whisked off the red box and stood on the platform, mopping the sweat from his brow.

If Mr. Alexander, a singer of note and a com-

pellor of song in others, had failed to stir up any heat of enthusiasm, all the more certain was it that Dr. Torrey would fail also. There is a gloom under Dr. Torrey's eyes that does not commend him; it is as though he burned with a kind of lifeless fire. He speaks in a hard, dry, even voice: without inspiration, without any wonderfulness of sympathy. One does not feel that he is on intimate terms with his hearers; one imagines that he views their hearts, not as the kisses of God blown about the world, but as things dismally and naturally devoted to the devil. His address was simple enough, direct enough, unrhetorical enough. He seemed to preach Hell for licensed victuallers, and told the story of a rich man who had once said: "I'll hold on to my money till death, and if Christ and Heaven must go, they must go." "That's what you say practically," he wound up, gloomy as a bull preparing to fight, "if you go out of this building without accepting Christ." Having defined Hell and drawn some morals, he called upon the audience to bow in silent prayer. During the prayer, he appeared to me like a man trying to bully his neighbours into Heaven. Throwing his arm out with a Jonah-like air of doom, he ordered all who had accepted Christ for the first time that night to "stand right up." Some of the lovers eyed the shopgirls nervously. Dr. Torrey's voice deepened. "All of you who

have accepted, etc," he repeated, "please stand right up." An infant rose in a gallery. "God bless you, sir." Another. "And you, sir." A girl. "And you." Invitation after invitation brought a boy or a young woman to a standing position; but in the great hall they were few in a laughable degree. Dr. Torrey stood still, like an auctioneer waiting for a further bid. "There's somebody standing in the choir," an assistant whispered hoarsely across to him. Veering round, Dr. Torrey spread out his arm and gave the blessing. Then, having captured so many prisoners, he began to attack the house in detail. First came the floor, then the boxes, then the galleries, and, last of all, the choir. Ultimately, a few score of converts must have been raked in. They were compelled to stand up in a mass during the singing of a hymn, and to come slowly down to the benches in front of the platform. Here Dr. Torrey's assistants pounced upon them. They sat in praying clumps. There was a mighty whispering, a great rustling of the leaves of the Bible. The benches were like a sea of victims, struggling under the burden of damnation and perplexity. The sight of the little, dowdy girls who crowded thither, aspiring to wear the white robes of Christ, filled me with intense pity. I trust they saw in their dreams something sweeter than an avoided Hell-fire. For myself, like the majority of the audience, I could get no diviner vision from the plain words of Dr. Torrey.

An Adventure Among Billiard Balls.

THERE are men who are in love with billiards. They are not so fat as the men who are in love with dogs or wrestling or the sports that have the reputation of being manly. They are often pale, and smoke pipes, and wear long overcoats indoors. Their life is full of romance, and they worship their gods in little rooms that are heaped with colour and wonder. There is no temple so small as a billiard-room; no temple is the scene of so much wasting enthusiasm. I was in Soho-square one day recently—a square that always seems to me to be dim and strange, and suggests the thought that beautiful people may once have lived there. The twilight was falling about the trees in grey veils, and the cabmen on the ranks were thinking of getting ready their blue and red lights. With the pleasant sense of expectancy that one always has as one passes into a room filled with artificial light while it is still day, I stopped at the door of Orme and Sons' billiard warehouse, and went inwards to a room where the tournament

of the Billiard Markers' Association was in progress. There was a silence hanging about the entrance to the room like a caught breath. The man at the door bade me in dumb show remain where I was until some critical stroke had been made. I stood in an air of whispers and tobacco smoke and the gloom that is always on the shores of intense light, and observed a body earnestly foreshortened over the green cloth, with eyes like a hunter's studying the relations between the balls. The white line of a cue shot out as from nowhere, and the red ball was sent spinning around the cushions. Nothing that mattered had happened, however. The body leaned back into the darkness, and found a seat for itself on a cane-bottomed chair. "Thirty-four break," croaked the marker, with a monotonous gravity. The whispering of the audience became as thunderous as it is within the means of whispering to be. There was, as it were, a grumble of applause. I was admitted through the door in the sigh of an interval just as the eyes of the enthusiasts were preparing to concentrate themselves again.

The walls of the room, hanging with pictures by Cecil Aldin and photographs of men playing billiards, were deep in shadow. In the shadow lay back men of all ages. One received from a swift look at them an impression of faces

that were white smudges in the gloom, a little note of red sometimes showing itself under the noses where a cigarette was burning. One man was there with a grey chin and the latest fashion of collar. Beside him a clean-shaven boy leaned his elbow on his knee and looked out under the green lamp-shades with shining eyes. On the other side a tall man sat straight up with an umbrella between his legs, his face a pale oval, draped in a vague, dark beard. Sometimes one of the men would smile at the other at sight of a fine cannon, and, should an easy shot be missed, the young man with the shining eyes would sit back restlessly, and draw his breath through his teeth with a queer noise. Near the door another young man, lank and worn with the business of sport, spread his feet, shod in patent leather, out into the light. He sprawled, a wisp of manhood, glorious with a fawn-coloured waterproof and a busy meerschäum pipe. His hat was on the back of his head, and his hands in his overcoat pockets. Thin reddish hair crowned a thin face wearing the weariness that is the posture of the town. Never did he draw a puff the quicker by reason either of a loose or a notable piece of play. One of the players might slip in past the red from an almost impossible position; but the thin young man's eyelids would only droop the lower, as though he found in surprising things merely a new phase

of tiresomeness. Should the plain ball tumble awkwardly into a pocket before touching a neighbour, and so add three to spot's score, he affected scarcely to have seen it; like a passionless god, he had laid aside his prerogative either to praise or to blame. He simply gazed, as if in an indolent dream, at the green cloth with the streams of light falling on it, and the red and white balls running hither and thither over its surface, filled with little gold pictures—the dappled reflections of the gas. He demanded only this and the monotonous music that always echoes in such a room. The dry speech of the balls as they meet, the double note of a sudden cannon, the whisper of a rest as it is pushed out over the baize, the raucous cry of the marker calling out the scores as a serious policeman reads out the claims of would-be electors in a revision court—these made up the only symphony to which he cared to listen. One felt that he was the inhabitant of some strange subterranean world, in which men were but a murmur and a white face, and the gloom was grotesque and intense with the thoughts it gave rise to, and the noises were always the same, like the noises on some waste and windless shore. One pictured the whole affair as, after all, a townsman's way of eating the lotus.

The players, who moved earnestly round the

table in white shirtsleeves, were each of them little men, and each of them showed a vein standing out on his temple. One of them—he leaped beyond his neighbour in swift breaks of thirty and forty—was a jutting-hipped, sharp-nosed fellow with a white excess of eagerness on his set face. His eyes came to rapid conclusions as he noted the lie of the balls, and, after tipping them into each other in a triple movement, he was off like a playing kitten preparing for the changed position of affairs. While he rubbed the chalk on his cue, his eyes still raced round the table. His life was in his fingers; he was strung up to the mastery of his materials; he was like an orthodox person dressed up for a speech at a red-letter religious service, and enjoying the excitement of the occasion. The little man who opposed him had a wrinkled throat and wrinkled brows, and his excitement was not joyous. He was red, not white, with nervousness, and that is always a mark of weakness. I am sure he would be capable of a joke on ordinary days, but a sinner who has been found out scarcely wears so serious a flush of perplexity. In his strokes, he would pot his enemy in an agony of silence. He must have missed cannons that he could have made blindfolded had nothing depended on the game. He fumbled with his cue much as a cricketer might fumble with his bat, knowing that the woman he loves is looking

on at the game. It was certain he realised that his fortunes were broken past mending. He sat down with great sighs in his breast as his opponent set out on every fresh march of scoring. The perspiration on his face was the symbol of a small tragedy. The lank young man observed it unmoved. For myself, I felt so troubled with sympathy that after a while I rose and came out.

Revolutionaries, Commonsense and the Czar.

I love and admire the revolutionary. The revolutionary with ideas is by way of being a prophet; the revolutionary without ideas may be vividly summed up as a crank. One evening last week the Queen's Hall was fairly well filled with prophets and cranks, eager to protest against the massacre of certain workmen in the streets of St. Petersburg, and—all of them except Mr. George Bernard Shaw—to express sympathy with the victims of the street slaughter. Mr. Shaw declared that, for his part, he sympathised, not with the victims of the massacre, but with the revolution, in which the massacre was merely a preliminary incident.

Neither the prophets nor the cranks altogether understand Mr. Shaw. In their estimate of him they seem to me to be almost as far astray as those not very presentable people whose want of beauty we pretend to gloss over by saying that they have common sense. There were several vessels of common sense present at the Queen's

Hall meeting. One of them—at least, I supposed he was suffering from common sense—was thrown out of the lower balcony in an interval between two speeches. A grey-beard, he had applauded the name of M. Delcassé, and as the sentences came from the lips of the orators he either supported or controverted them by the expression of a very audible, if irrelevant, opinion. The lovers of freedom were human enough not to be able to endure freedom of interruption in their own precincts. Consequently they fell upon him with something of the air of a football match, and the other common-sense people remained quiet under their bowler hats for the rest of the evening.

The prophets and cranks were now able to crow victoriously on their mounds. Loosely clad, with dark faces, coming from all nations and speaking all languages, fiercely proud, indignant, gentle under many sorrows, toilworn, dandiacal, grizzled, and baby-faced, a company of contradictions in all save the possession of eyes that blazed more than is common, they expressed the sense of their triumphs, while a collection was being taken up, by singing the "Marseillaise" with a religious frenzy. The singing enthusiasm for Liberty, indeed—Liberty with the bass pedal down—was a prevalent note of the evening. It quite drowned the little common-sense fellows in the bowler hats. It drowned or half-drowned everybody and every-

thing, except Mr. Shaw. Mr. Shaw disports himself with an insistent buoyancy amid the waves of rhetoric. Socrates must have played with the rhetoricians of Athens in something like the same easy exasperating spirit.

The Chairman, a gentleman with a stout and shining skull, was, I fear, a rhetorician. I heard the words 'base, brutal and bloody' applied to some dull deed or person in the course of his address, and I wondered why, if Heaven had intended Englishmen to become excited, it had not endowed them with the gift of using strong language in a more fascinating way. 'Let the storm break,' he wound up, quoting Gorky, very hoarsely and shining all over; 'let it gather in strength.' By the shouts which greeted him as he sat down it was evident that the audience approved of the metaphor. It is only fair to say, however, that not all the orators confined themselves to tun-bellied words. Mr. H. M. Hyndman was guilty of an intellectual comment when he represented the Russian workers as fighting 'for a liberty which we Englishmen have got, but don't know how to use.' But Mr. Hyndman is a much more remarkable man than his generation has perceived. Dressed in a long frock-coat, of the middle stature, stout and prosperous-looking, short of neck, and with a whitening beard spread over his chest, he has the prepared shoulders of a fighter and the white brow

of one in whom reason has not entirely murdered dreams. If he called the Tsar 'one of the most infamous blackguards that ever lived,' one felt that the words were tipped with a prophetic and earnest fire. One was under the spell of a considerable orator, and would have listened to oaths from his lips without looking up questioningly. He does not shriek or rave; his utterance never loses a certain majesty, a something that commands. Compared with this great Socialist, few of the other speakers impressed me with a sense of bigness. One of them was a tall man with an eyeglass, whose clothes were of a conspiratorial blackness. A red beard depended from his chin like a broad flame. He failed to startle us in our chairs, however, though he admitted us very solemnly into the secret of who it was that blew up the Winter Palace. Mr. Atherley-Jones, K.C.—a little, ruddy, stoutish, clean-shaven man, who also wore an eyeglass—gave us of his Parliamentary wisdom, but it was his Parliamentary humour that moved the audience to the greatest delight. An ingratiating lady from the North, coming after, selected as the most remarkable feature of the Russian revolution the fact that the women are fighting side by side with the men, and fighting for equal rights. She spoke in favour of the enfranchisement of woman. Mothers who are themselves slaves—such was her argument—can bear only children fit to be slaves.

The revolutionaries applauded her very noisily, but the men among them laughed to themselves—as men always do laugh in their easy, superior way at a woman's wisdom—as she sat down.

Mr. Cunninghame Graham and Mr. George Bernard Shaw—Mr. Shaw declared that they two represented the really great traditions of English literature—spoke in the later part of the meeting. Mr. Cunninghame Graham gave the audience what it liked; Mr. Shaw gave it what he pleased. Slim and sharp as a file, with a foreign air in his pointed grey beard, and a certain haughtiness in his eyes, Mr. Graham rose, angular, and full of smiles and bows as a stage Frenchman, and revolved this way and that in excited recollection of the Trafalgar-square riots and the Featherstone trouble. His sentences were clipped short with cheers; the hair on his small head seemed to bristle with the enthusiasm that the presence of a great audience stirs. He proposed that the Rothschilds should withhold financial aid from a Government that persecuted their co-religionists, and wordily orated of 'deeds, not words,' in a manner that went home to every impressionable heart in the building. There were ideas in his speech, I admit, and admirable ones; but what a florid setting they had! A new, clear atmosphere seemed to radiate from the long, loose form of Mr. Shaw. Pallid as an invalid, as much at home as a schoolboy on a playing-field, somewhat

resembling the portraits painted of Tolstoi in his middle years, Mr. Shaw faced his audience with an odd light showing under his crooked brows. He hoped that we were not there in any spirit of virtuous indignation against the Government of Russia. The audience, having heard that he was an Irishman, smiled. 'The Tsar,' said Mr. Shaw, 'if he were on this platform——' 'He would never leave it alive,' shouted a revolutionary with opinions. 'Ah,' mused Mr. Shaw, 'I am not so sure that it is not we who would leave the hall with our heads hanging. I imagine that to anything we could say he would have a most effective retort.' Whereupon he proceeded to cut up the English Constitution and the British Empire into small pieces. He mocked at the 'Times,' which could approve of the assassination of M. Plehve and rave distractedly over the Phoenix Park murders. He balanced Russian with Indian famines. As though in parallel columns, he marshalled a series of Russian and British crimes, explaining how such things are the only logical consequences of the bureaucratic Governments that men allow to rule them. Here was the sceptical Socratic method brought to a fine point. Here was a flood of ideas—those curious solvents of rhetoric into its component want of parts. No man, after hearing the speech, could have sung 'Rule Britannia,' without blushing. Mr. Shaw has not left one

jingoism, one rhetorical formula, for another. His happiness lies not in believing this or that, but in attempting to discover what this or that in the last analysis means. That is why the revolutionaries and the common-sense people are so frightened of him. They believe that a man who can laugh at anything so important as themselves is a cynic. Well, even a thinker must have some amusement. While any of us remain alive—whether revolutionaries, vessels of common-sense, or indescribables—Mr. Shaw need not stop laughing.

Spring in the West End.

I THINK it was Alexander Smith who once described spring as 'leaping upon Edinburgh like a tiger.' Here in London the spring comes with as victorious a splendour. There is something of the tiger in the stealth and suddenness of its approach: like the tiger, it surely had a tropical birth and bringing-up. That fabulous English spring, with its constant hide-and-seek of sunlight and rain, never visits London. When spring arrives it steals over us like waves of odour from a hot-house. It oppresses, it troubles, it lifts us into an ecstasy. It is as though in our hot-house the beauty and fragrance of innumerable blooms had broken upon our senses. Under the golden sun of May the wealthy woman and the woman who pretends to be wealthy glow in Piccadilly in a thousand shapes and fashions of loveliness. Their colours vie in ardency with the sun: their garments surpass the glory of Solomon's. It is the presence of wonderful women that makes spring in London a memory so

delectable. The rejuvenescent green patches in the squares, the stirring of birds in the back-garden, are beside this things of an indifferent flavour. The kingdom of woman has been established, and from Kensington Gardens to Piccadilly Circus the chatter of her words and the rustling of her skirts remind one, like a fine anthem, of the rightful and beautiful queen we must for a season serve.

It is in the Park, I think, in the afternoon, that woman is most benign in her royalty. I do not like her on horseback earlier in the morning: for the horsewomen of these days dress poorly, and ride even a little worse. In the afternoon, however, she comes out full-sail, and is rolled round the Park in her chariot, with her boa streaming and her postures gloriously idle. It is an odd affair, that afternoon drive. The endless girdle of carriages that encompasses the Park, and that second inner girdle moving the other way exercise a fascination on the least unwise of us. The fall of horses' hoofs, the crossed arms of footmen, the flashing of wheels in the sunlight, the polished hats of dandies, the lolling airs of rich ladies, call upon us for applause as decisively as does a picturesque nook of landscape, or a thread of sweet music. When we deal squarely with ourselves, these are among the ingredients that go to make up our dream of happiness. Even the reflected nobility that belongs to the looker-on

we cherish. See the number of us who gather round the gates at Hyde Park Corner, tirelessly watching the carriages go out and in. Within, those little green chairs, from which a penny view may be had of England's brightest and best, are all occupied. Under the elms at the end of Rotten Row tier upon tier of country misses see the golden pomp go by, and hear a newer and more exquisite spring beating in their hearts at the spectacle. Nor is their delight vulgar, as is often pretended. Immoral it may be, but it is wholly artistic in the craving it evinces after transient beauty and joy that lies beyond attainment. The passion for flowers itself must be judged by the same measure.

And what a setting has this procession of luxury and colour! The tall rows of elms that wear the sun like a garment, the lax laburnum with its falling yellow fringes, the lilac that moves its odorous fingers in every breeze, the willows that are blown in the wind like women with flying hair: these, with the railed-in lawns of grass, perform a certain homage of beauty to the queens who pass among them. The blackbird, too, utters its matter-of-fact, melodious note. The pigeons that gather round the perambulators for crumbs ruffle their shining necks in preparation for their muffled love-songs. The sparrows hop in and out among the rhododendrons that promise before long to be splendid. Shadows fall on the face of the

Serpentine like a passage of great birds. The water is curled all over like a wig, and each of the crisp little curls seems to be blown with a noise against the narrow cement shore in imitation of larger seas. There is wind and warmth, light and the boast of colour. The country miss paces amid the scene, peeping sidelong at some great lady, or turning her small head for a view of a real live lord. The country miss carries a parasol, and warns Nature off her like a plague. She is too simple to be in love with the sun and families of trees. Fine clothes and jewels and coachmen with cockades are of a sort that fills her mind more pleasantly.

Indeed, if one steps out of the Park into Piccadilly, one cannot deny that town catches the imagination very beautifully. The dip and rise of the great way, as it passes the Green Park, contain more colours—and more elegantly mingled—than the rainbow. The dishevelled regiment of 'buses that struggles up and down the hills is gay with tunics of countless hues. There is the Hammersmith red, and the chocolate brown of West Kensington; a King's Cross green leaps by the side of the white of Fulham; the Royal Blue and the blue and red of Clapham Junction carry their banners abreast. On the shoulder of the hill, near Albemarle-street, the armies of 'buses and cabs and motor-cars become intercrossed and

interwoven, and are pulled up in a notable confusion. Minute after minute one sits there in the sun, content with the view of one's neighbours, with their laughter and the shouts of drivers and the grinding of heavy brakes. It is all as slow as a Royal funeral, and the pageant is more glorious. The little flags that wave on the 'buses proclaim the victory of town over the nudity of the country. It was man who built clubs and roads and the hansom cab. It was man who invented the hat and the boa and the parasol. And, on a spring day in Piccadilly, he looks around him and tells himself that it is all very good.

Tea-shops lie in the West-End, multitudinous as burrows in a rabbit-warren, and like rabbits the lords and ladies and the inhabitants of Bayswater scurry into them in the afternoon. There is the Academy, too, where a thousand painters have provided light meals for the fashionable mind. In Burlington House one walks in the odour of scents and amid a garden of costumes and a choir of happy voices. The great lady with her lorgnette moves through the galleries, scattering the crowd before her like a goddess of battle. The country miss, bearing her little blue catalogue, twists in and out among the throng like an eel, pulling out her dainty pencil to jot down 'beautiful' opposite a Marcus Stone, or 'sublime' beside a Peter Graham, gives her sweet little head a headache by trying to under-

stand an allegory of Mr. Solomon's, and passes on with a sigh of pleasure to the more limpid work of Mr. Sant. Then she sits down and looks about her, and decides that her neighbours are ever so much more interesting than the pictures. And, upon my soul, I agree with her.

An Afternoon at the Academy

THERE was a little girl being dragged from room to room round Burlington House one day last week when I went to see the exhibition of the Royal Academy. On the nose of her father—a long, lean penguin's-bill of a nose—a pair of spectacles hung gracelessly. Over his excited face rose a tall hat from the provinces—a Sunday thing, a hated and wife-enforced thing. He was a young fellow, and cannot have been married very many years. He was young enough to feel awkward as he pulled and pushed his infant daughter through a broken tide of white skirts, amid which the trousered legs of the men stood up like the piles of some jetty. Clearly, he and his wife had come up from a big town with the notion of seeing life, and so having something to talk about till Christmas and after. He might have been a solicitor, and she the wife of a solicitor. She had the air of a middle-class woman who every moment finds her heart in her throat at the thought that the elbow she has just grazed may

have belonged to a lady of title. She was flushed under her garden hat—or was it a picture hat?—I do not know the difference—with all the joy with which a woman of the provinces reddens in the odorous conservatory called London. She had come to the Academy because she knew from the visits of earlier Junes that here the swift geraniums and the golden-tongued lilies—yes, and the spiky cactuses—of fashion were to be seen at their most wonderful. She admired pictures, too for she had herself made crystoleum copies of Marcus Stone before she was married. She had early fallen in love with clever and pretty things, and was determined that her bare-kneed daughter should not now miss so reimbursing a passion. In three-quarters of a century or so, perhaps, the little girl will be bragging to her artistic descendants about not having missed an Academy since the year Nought-five—the year of Furze's picture. She cannot have seen much of the show, however, except legs and heavy skirts. The mother scrupulously read through the catalogue, and paused with a religious air before the portraits of Royal persons, and family parties, and children with the light on their hair. She put her hand on her husband's sleeve as they came opposite Mr. Harold Speed's portrait of King Edward, and tried to impress him with the artistic beauty of the light that fell upon the King's forehead. The husband,

however, had both hands on his child's shoulders, saving her, as it were, from being swamped in the seething mill-race of the men and women who flirt with pictures. He had no eyes for pictures; provincial though he was, he did not look even at the religious allegories. One saw that he was groaning in spirit, a martyr to duty, and his long, white nose was moist with tragical fears. He was giving his child, however, an experience which she might boast of till her dying day. Like a loving and tender parent, he rattled her through the crowd until she must have been black and blue with his finger-marks, like a drunkard haled off to the police-cells against his will by a horrible-handed policeman.

The Academy is the cathedral of those who worship the clever and the pretty. Even when one cannot see clever and pretty pictures there, one can always see clever and pretty faces and dresses. Over the turnstile where one deposits one's shilling on the way in, a clever and pretty policeman yawns from sheer nausea. Ladies that seem to be but a laugh wrapped in folds of swansdown drift in past him, as though borne upon a wind coming from some beautiful country; but no interest raises his lid a millimetre the higher. Surge upon surge of chattering things, spindle-figured or fat or even comely, sweeps by him and makes the galleries restless and rustling and musical. For myself, I

can only stand amazed at this procession of the spring's graces. I cannot stay for a minute's sight of a picture but a gold-spectacled old man shoulders into me in his excitement, as, with waving arms, he points out to a group of ladies the unnumbered merits of a Leader. One feels in one's attempts to see the pictures like the small boy at a football match, with a thousand leaping and shrieking spectators walling off the game from him with their sinister figures. One hears, too, not the voices that uplift, but the voices that jar or amuse. A lady, embittered, and turkey-like in the carriage of her body, stood with her daughter in front of Professor Herkomer's extensive painting of a Communal Sitting of the Burghers of Landsberg. They stared at the long room and the large figures in a silence of enjoyment. Then the daughter said that she wondered what was the subject of the picture. The elderly lady raised a lorgnette to her eyes for a better look. 'A body of men, evidently,' she suggested, in a loud strident voice. The daughter pursed her lips up reflectively. 'I think it's a deputation,' she said, smiling suddenly, as though a happy inspiration had struck her. With that she ran off towards another young lady, who had a catalogue, and all three seemed very impressed when they found that they were looking at a Communal Sitting of the Burghers of Landsberg.

This kind of felicitous talk delights the ear and the mind so wholesalely at Burlington House that for its sake one is willing to forgive much to the Academicians. In addition, one is amused by the sight of a tall, stubble-bearded man with opera-glasses crushed into his eyes backing his way through a crowd of sidelong-scornful ladies, determined to see the high pictures in exactly the point of view he desires. In the simoom of din and colour, however, one at length grows distracted—eager to escape as a newly-caged bird. There is a pestilence of scent in the air, and one longs for the fresher odours of the streets and the vegetable-booths. One might as well try to read a thousand novels all at the same time at a children's school-treat as attempt to get a passable digest of the pictures at the Academy in an afternoon's visit. It is as a school-treat, however, that the Academy will be most wisely regarded. The grown-up boys and girls of England go there, and romp, not with shouting and somersaults, but quietly, as respectable people romp. Like children, they flutter with excitement, and, like children, they are ready to cry out with surprise at almost anything. 'The world,' as Stevenson said, 'is so full of a number of things, I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings,' and 'happy as kings' is a very apt description of the people who are not greatly concerned about art, but enjoy an afternoon at the Royal Academy.

The Gentlemen of England Batting.

No one can reverence the sun and look without thrills at a cricket match on a bright day. On Thursday, a day on which the wind came from the east in sunny mouthfuls, I went to Lord's, where the Gentlemen of England were playing against the Australians. Here I found a great crowd of City men with black stove-pipes on their heads, looking very intent and very respectable. Their clothes, however, had lost all their neatness with the dust that had been blowing about in the streets. The city men looked foolish, indeed, compared with the tradespeople who were scattered among them, and who had an air of greater comfort in their tweed suits and round hats. So terribly was the sun burning down that only a few of us persisted in smoking. Most of the spectators sat with wrinkled temples, as though all their efforts were needed to keep their eyes fixed on the brightness of the field and on the game. The grass was by this time of an exhausted green colour, and, when I arrived, beautiful white and lithe figures were

running this way and that way over its surface. The Gentlemen of England were batting. They had just lost their second wicket, and Beldam was carrying his bat back to the pavilion. MacLaren came out in his place, large and airy, and undisturbed by the clapping of the spectators. He did not earn many cheers, however. Cotter was bowling from the east, and MacLaren seemed to regard him with something of the fascinated amazement with which they say a rabbit watches a stoat. Cotter, indeed—a compact, hard man, with jutting hips and a strong neck—cannot be an altogether pleasant enemy. Before he bowls he takes a long race up towards the wicket, ducking like a water-hen as he runs, and juggling with his wrist in the oddest way. Then, at the right moment, he lets the ball loose in a violent hurl, and if it pauses on this side of the end of the world it is the fault of the wicket-keeper or the boundary railings. Newland, the wicket-keeper, a little fellow, clothed as though in the leg-guards and gloves of a giant, stood far back from the batsman while Cotter was bowling. One might have caricatured him as a shivering schoolboy, determined to be plucky, and standing with his mouth open and groaning inwardly, as he saw the little dark devil of a ball speeding towards him, and suddenly realised all that he had let himself in for. One felt that he must be meditating upon

the wisdom of turning tail and flying for his life towards the pavilion. Only behind some barrier could he have watched the coming of the little dark devil with equanimity. No wonder that it sometimes beat past the combined picket of his arms and legs, and tore on, as if with a grin, to the boundary. No wonder that MacLaren, posted still nearer Cotter, fell, a confused mass of good attitudes, before so swift and terrible an onset. Yet to have frightened MacLaren out before he had made a run, was all the glory Cotter had to his credit at the end of the day.

Warner — "Plum" the ungilded youth of England call him — stood as immune from all this hurricane bowling as Ulysses, amid the general wreckage, from the splashing rocks of Polyphemus. A small, innocent match of a man, full of wiles in the art of cutting, he swung his bat with ease and—as if he were capable of malice! —with an almost malicious pleasure, as the ball slid over the grass towards him. One could not but admire so impudent a coolness. His bat, from its size, one might have judged to be almost as heavy as himself, and yet he handled it with as brave an assurance as if it had been no weightier than a broom, and he sweeping away ridiculous dust with it. He seemed as if, whenever he chose, he could whisk the ball off to the boundary, and have four more runs placed by his

number on the marking-board. Captain Wynyard at first showed no such housemaidenish ease in dealing with the Australian bowling. Large and alert and graceful at the wicket, he held his bat in close to his legs, and faced the bowlers with crafty suspiciousness. Sometimes, indeed, when the ball came tumbling towards his pads, he would swing his bat in a Berserker rage; but the ball would juke past him untouched, and leave him stooping with one knee on the ground in baffled amazement. He seemed suddenly to realise that his wicket was in a state of close siege, and that he must venture upon nothing but the most diminutive sorties. His tactics changed accordingly. Ball after ball he allowed to slip by him, or merely sent back to the bowler with a click. Every now and again, however, he found an opportunity for more interesting things. Seeing no one standing at mid-wicket, he would nudge a ball into the unguarded place, and be off with a cry towards the opposite wicket. This business of stealing runs became, after a while, a moderately exciting affair. One waited for Captain Wynyard's cry and his scurry up the pitch as a child waits with tense patience for the coming of the seventh wave with its thunders. Later in the day, however, Captain Wynyard became weary of the part of a timid boy robbing an orchard under the gardener's nose. He began, as in

former days, to gather his runs in with something of the boldness and great-mindedness of an old chieftain out on a cattle-lifting expedition. Before he resigned his policy of cunning, however, he cost Mr. Phillips, one of the umpires, a bad fall; for Evans, hearing Captain Wynyard calling upon him to take part in one of these hairbreadth affairs of his, dashed up the pitch in so blind a frenzy that he was unable to stop until he had leaped against the body of Mr. Phillips, and left him lying, a tumbled thing, with his legs in the air, like a house-painter fallen in a fit. This was a windfall, however, to a crowd that of all crowds is the readiest for laughter—the seriously-clad and sunny-faced crowd that sits gossiping and with its half-brains working at cricket matches.

Captain Wynyard took Jessop's place, I believe, as a player in the English team. It was Hesketh-Prichard, however, who was really Jessop's substitute, and set the benches under the awnings and in the stands roaring. Hesketh-Prichard is a golden-haired giant, who can tell stories or bowl with something of the tempestuous delight of a fighter at a fair. He bats, however, more like a child scooping out sand with a wooden spade. No one seems to realise what a darling child's game he is playing at more clearly than himself. On Thursday the Australians could break no hole in his infantile defences. He stood there, throwing

back his little spadefuls of sand, and letting a great laugh out of him on the two occasions upon which he came by a run. Twice, too, the ball missed the middle of his bat. It just grazed the edge and, veering past the wicket-keeper, was carried by its own force to the boundary. Hesketh-Prichard, seeing his score mounting up, threw his huge, capless head back, and joined in the roars of delight that went like a storm round the field. Such a munificence of good nature I had never seen before on the playing-field. I felt quite angry with Brearley for letting himself be stumped the moment after and bringing the innings of the Gentlemen to an end. But it was near six o'clock. So I left my seat and came home.

At the 'Varsity Sports.

THE undergraduates were not very excited on Friday. There is, perhaps, no sufficient bullfight strenuousness in a contest of running or jumping to shift one out of the mood of indifference. At a football match the young men from Oxford and Cambridge seem able to forget for the moment that they are in the presence of ladies, and shout with a vehemence that ought only to be permitted if one was on the point of being murdered. They were very decorous on Friday, however, had it not been for one pale boy, who broke the conventions and wore a straw hat. For the rest, it was a quietly chattering crowd, very neat and clean and fond of violets. Some of those who had brought their mothers with them carried field-glasses slung over their shoulders. Everybody, too, carried a pencil. They were all writing on the back of their programmes, making a list of the names of the boys who were first in the different contests, or a note of some memorable detail, such as the length of a

jump or the time occupied in a race. To be sufficiently interested in anything to desire to put the record of it into writing, is, I imagine, to live successfully.

I was late in reaching West Kensington on Friday, and I believe I missed what was a very fine hundred yards' race. I was sorry I had not come later, however, for a soldiers' band in long cloaks was playing "Killarney" in the middle of the field on my arrival. There is no tune in the world that I like less than "Killarney"—a rain-bringer among songs. By a curious chance, the only rain that fell during the sports fell at this critical moment. The field was dotted here and there with the black and lissom figures of the judges. It was odd to see them flying this way and that in the gloves and tall hats and frock-coats of unathletic civilians. In one corner of the ground a number of bare-kneed figures were distorting themselves in the strangest fashion. One at a time they drew off their blazers, and, taking a weight attached to a steel thong into their hands, spun round, swinging the weight madly about their ears. They twisted faster and faster, until they were like men caught in a whirlwind and helpless. 'This was all one saw from outside the railings—this and the weight flying off into the air, and the judges running after it with a long measuring-tape. No wonder that the young men around me did not lose their gravity

under the strain of any excessive excitement. The high jump was no more exhilarating. It, too, was hidden away in a corner of the ground. One was aware only that a white thing had leaped up very determinedly in the air, and had suddenly come back to earth sprawling. Then a man with a rake, or a besom, or something, ambled forward and soothed down the grass where the jumper had fallen. I never saw so much falling in my life. One of the youths, casting his blazer aside, came up time and again to the bar, rose like a bird seated on a wave, and then suddenly it was as though an unseen thing had caught him a blow on the face with an open palm. His feet shot from under him, wide apart, his arms waved at a loss, bar and far-flung limbs and all else rolled higgledy-piggledy on the grass, and where he fell there was a dark stain on his trousers. Another of the jumpers seemed anxious to get over the bar on the breast-stroke. He flung his heels up with a twist until in mid-air his head and his feet were on a level. When he was at his highest it was as though he were lying on his face in the air. He, too, had a great fall, bringing down the bar to share in his ruin. Ultimately the judges grew tired of seeing this kind of thing, and declared that three out of the four jumpers were equal, none of them being able to get higher than five feet seven inches.

I was in a good position for seeing the start of the hurdles. Four bare-kneed boys slouched over to the starting-place with very grave faces, and eyes that looked as though they beheld some wonderful and commanding vision far beyond the ring of scribbling undergraduates who leaned over the railings. Arriving, each of them gazed, like men looking for gold, at the line they were expected to toe. They hollowed out little holes in the ground with their shoes, and prepared them daintily with their fingers. Then they broke into a run, and leaped a hurdle or so, as though out of curiosity. Returning, they took off what clothes they could spare, and, with the sun falling on them, fixed their toes in the holes they had made, crouching like cats about to spring. There was a white smudge of pistol-smoke, and the four boys were off, up and down, up and down, like rapid waves coming in a crowd, among the wicker fences. There was no time to be excited. The race was at an end, and the boys were gravely fixing the blazers on their shoulders again before one quite realised that they had started. The three-mile race was a bit of more precious matter. It was very beautiful to watch the red-haired Cambridge boy as he hung for a mile on the heels of two taller Oxford men, and as he gradually seemed to run by inspiration, and passed them with parted lips. The boy ran well. Pale

and neat-shouldered, with his head lying back and beautifully poised, and with a light in his eyes, he had the air of the hero who wins races and things in school stories. The single Oxford runner who finished dropped far behind, his hand flapping against his breast in an agony of weariness. Still further back a fair-haired child from Cambridge kept running, heedless of the laughter of many, and the cheers of others who perceived that not to give up even when the race is hopelessly lost is a sign of fine courage. If the race had only been a few miles longer, I'm sure the fair-haired child would have won.

The Innocence of Newmarket.

I TOOK the train to Newmarket on Wednesday to see the Two Thousand Guineas run. One of the men who travelled in the carriage with me was a South-country farmer, a squat, dark, bearded fellow, who gingerly fixed a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles on his nose, in order to re-read with more assurance the names of the probable starters and the jockeys they would carry. He had buns with him in a paper bag, and crushed one of these into his mouth at steady intervals during his reading. His companion, who sat opposite to him, chewed his food more slowly. Dull of face, with a flaxen moustache, and holding a thick staff dourly between his knees, he, too, had the country air, and his conversation consisted of the country grunts and silences. The dark man with the beard was of a more talkative sort. Leaping from one subject to another, he spoke of the chances of this horse or that, expressed the joy his palate felt in the taste of "pa-arsnips and gravy," turned from this to some betting calculation, and was off

again at a tangent, criticising a cluster of sheep that was moving slowly across a field near the railway-line. The other simply grunted in answer, rolling his lips round a bun gloomily. A more dandified youth, who wore lavender gloves, filled one of the corners of the carriage. There were gentleness and melancholy in his face, and he looked as if he was going to the races because he thought them wicked and fascinating rather than because he expected to enjoy them.

The High-street of Newmarket was a fair of landaus and shouting men and boys. Everybody you met offered you a seat up to the race-course for a shilling or two shillings. Hoarse youths accosted you with all their voices, pleading to you to come with them for "a bob to the stands." The landaus were quickly filled with fat men, and boys from the University jumped into odd empty places. The town was shining with light, and busy with black, noisy figures. I walked on up the hill towards the heath. Along the road at regular intervals the halt and the maimed and the blind were ranged, playing piano-organs or whining for an alms. One stout blind man, with the leading facts of his biography hanging on his chest, stood beside a hurdy-gurdy, shaking a few copper pieces in a tin, and screaming, "Good luck to you, ladies and gentlemen! Good luck to you, ladies and gentlemen!" to the passers-by. Hale and hearty

he seemed to be, as he repeated his good wishes like an insistent parrot, his old instrument turning out hymn and music-hall song in a fine medley. Later in the day, when I came back to the station, he was still rattling his tin, and bellowing out very radiantly, "I tipped the winner, ladies and gentlemen! I tipped the winner, ladies and gentlemen!" Of all the beggars he was the most notable.

Newmarket race-course, a long, thin strip of green, climbs the lower slope of the heath for a mile or so, undulating after the pattern of a mild switch-back. Long straight lines of white railings close it in from the public. On one border of the course rise a number of stands above the many betting rings. On the other border the heath is free to all, and one could not find a bookmaker if one's life depended on it. I accepted the freedom of the heath, and strolled among the common people. Numbers of these were small boys, wearing leggings and heavily-peaked caps, and smoking cigarettes and spitting, and spreading to the best of their ability the impression that they had private information from the stables. They gathered round the door of the saddling enclosure, and, when it was opened, they gazed greedily through to where aristocrats and stablemen and lean animals jostled one another. Out of this door the horses were led on their way to the starting-

post, the crowd of curious people being driven back meanwhile by a god-like horse-policeman. Canary-coloured and chocolate and apricot and red and green and blue, the jockeys sat astride the animals easily until they reached the course, and then they would be half-way up the horses' necks, all but standing in their stirrups with their knees gathered up, and flying like the wind down to the starting-post. Then was it the babel of the bookmakers under the stands reached its noisiest. Desperate snatchers at the last moment, they seemed in the distance to be shouting curses and insults, like a populace surrounding a new Bastille of saved-up property. One could imagine that heads were being broken and blows exchanged over there, so vigorous, so swirling was the stream of sound. The rattle of a bell in the pavilion gave warning that the horses had started. The murmur died away into a silence. The crowd stood to attention, like soldiers at the word of command. One heard an ejaculation here and there as someone with a field-glass observed a horse in the distance getting ahead of its rivals. As the horses drew nearer, the ejaculations increased in number and volume. A man would jump on his heels and cry, "The favourite wins!" and another man would jump up beside him and angrily contradict him, and a later speaker would pour a quick, cruel doubt on the views of both of them. Then there was a rush to

the palings, and everybody squeezing for a look over his neighbour's shoulder. "Sweet Mary! Sweet Mary!" they were all crying with as much excitement as people who had not gambled deeply could muster. "Sweet Mary simply rolls home," said a boy, disgustedly. And without a cheer or an audible groan the crowd turned to its pink racing-cards and studied the colours of the jockeys who would be riding in the Two Thousand Guineas.

The Two Thousand Guineas was to me a not very exciting race. One saw in the distance, as it were, a swarm of flies, with smaller flies seated on their shoulders. One saw the jockeys earnestly climbing the horses' heads, and the arms of each in a storm of motion like the arms of a man turning the handle of a windlass, with his life depending on the haste he put into his work. Gradually an orange or chocolate jersey drew ahead. "Rooj Crow's beaten! The favourite's beaten!" everybody cried. Suddenly a horse on the left of the dishevelled and galloping army came forward with long paces. The leading jockeys climbed still higher up towards the ears of their animals, their arms strained in new and whirling movements with the reins. Not another ounce of speed, however, was to be had for all their fury. The long strides of the newcomer were as relentless as fate. Sure as the Solway tides overtaking mere men and women

it dashed onwards, onwards. "Vedas! Vedas!" everybody cried. One or two horses flew past us. Somebody cheered, and the jockeys sat back peacefully in their saddles. Vedas had won. It was quite charming, quite innocent. But it would not have excited a curate. If I attend any more races, I shall certainly gamble, and learn some of the secrets of the pleasure men find in looking at horses. One does not mind, however, being virtuous in the idyllic surroundings of Newmarket. There are windmills on the horizon and red farmers around one, who roar, "God love a duck!" when they are excited, and a thousand other things that make one feel like chewing a straw and reading verses.

Men and Women in the Air.

I ALWAYS picture those who dwell in towns as underground creatures, cavernous, and afraid of the light. The pallor of the lean clerk and the wells of purple that lie under the shop-girl's eyes are tokens of a life on which the grinning sun was never meant to shine. One cannot cross one of the Thames bridges between six and seven in the evening without gaining the impression that the huddled and hurrying figures around one are of an alien and evil turn of spirit. Crooked and crushed in body, their faces ponderous with the less beautiful sins, weary and haunted things, ghosts of gods arrayed after the manner of tatterdemalions, they are a sight from which one would gladly veil one's eyes. Spring, however, bundles them out into the country places and restores to them the mantle of their godhead. The green hoods that the trees cast around themselves just now are no more desirable a wear than this mantle of light and gladness. One can scarcely pass a Sunday afternoon on Hampstead Heath

but one becomes aware of human nature where dust and pettiness were a day before. Here the gorse has begun to bloom. So far, it wears its yellow as a beautiful woman wears flowers; later it will resemble more closely some newly-rich lady, flaunting masses of vulgar jewellery. The silver birches, too, are shimmering with a green that is as yet only a veil, a veil like the returning waters of a fountain. Birds are calling foolish tunes from chestnut trees, where the opening leaves are like favours of green ribbon worn by a stately girl. The broad and crooked paths are losing themselves under the shadow of the spring, and calling boys and girls into retired places. For myself, I should like to have the whole Heath in my own private possession. Baulked of this, however, I am content enough to see the men and women of London coming out on it, spreading themselves over it, as a fleet of fishing-smacks that has passed out of the harbour spreads itself over the sea.

The capital of Hampstead Heath is the White Stone Pond, a shallow pool set on a hill, where the dogs rave like wolves, and there is splashing and loud crying all day long. Here, close by the long shadow of the flag-staff, a thousand people gather and ring the pond in with their gloomy clothes and colourless faces. Some of the oldest of them bring boats under their arms, and cast them

forth with their white sails for a lordly adventure on the pool. This is a sight of which I shall never tire—so solemnly do the grown men bend down, as they thrust out their little galleons from the shore, so nimbly with their pennons flying and their stretched sails dragging reflections alongside them do the boats swim across the water, so gladly do the children shout as the nose of a boat comes up against the back of a swimming dog, that no man with eyes and a sense of the wind crossing a heath could miss being happy. Then there is the constant procession of drays and spring-carts and lesser vehicles passing from one end of the pond to the other. One sees them with the wheels half-buried in the water, and the horses half afraid and wondering, now that their bellies are wet and hidden. It is all like some quintessence of seashore, some concise view of larger and merrier places. Clangorous, clamorous, restless, ecstatic, it may be summed up as a scene of mad dog and delighted baby, old men seriously at play, and grave-looking horses, Gulliver-like beasts amid a Lilliputian fleet. To lift a stick here among the dogs is to be like Doctor Faustus with the troop of devils squealing at his heels, as they hurry him into a worse world. Every dog, as he leaves the water, is a centre of rain-storms, a dispenser to just and unjust alike of April showers. To see a neighbour soaked by the showers is good fun

enough. It is even better fun to see a barelimbed urchin wading near the edge of the pond and tumbling, like a snapped mast, into the water, as he attempts to kick a foot-load of it over some less muscular child.

One finds pleasure on the Heath, however, elsewhere than round the White Stone Pond. One enjoys the dip and the wooded hollow that marches to Golder's Hill; and the cricket pitch by the way, where cherubs, casting off their coats like strong men, hold bats that are as big as their own bodies, and throw balls that seem to be larger and solider affairs than their heads. Always a policeman towers among them, the king of the forest, serious and incapable of haste, and not understanding. An older sort of boy marches off under the trees, learning to crack jokes with his friends and be a man. 'Get off the earth,' he says, tentatively as a boy of his own size passes, 'I want to spit.' His comrades throw up a great bellow at this, and the lonelier passenger goes on his path, blushing, and with hate in his heart. Elsewhere in the grass a father sprawls, a pipe gathered in his mouth and a family round his limbs. Clearly he has been a good parent that day, for the children are staining their mouths with orange skins. The fruit has been eaten, but the rind remains with its inner coating of yellow. Who that has not eaten the inside of an orange-

peel knows half the delights of which oranges are the treasures? Men speak of sucking the orange until it is dry and fancy it capable of giving no further pleasure. The child knows better, and lives in a more gallant philosophy. The fathers and mothers on Hampstead Heath gambol with their children in a way that shows how prone man is, if you set his feet in a clean place, to run after virtue. True, when their faces are hot with the wind and their limbs tired with running up earthy banks and pretending they are bears or baboons for their children's sakes, they remember that there is weariness in the world, and that bitter beer has often been of service as a kill-trouble. If the public houses grow a little loud and boisterous in the dimness of evening, that is but the mark that men and women have taken their first step back into the town.

Under the dark the Heath becomes less an open and natural place and more a garden, a recreation ground, of the town. Tall lamps, empty mimics of a better light, flicker on the Spaniard's-road, and they, and not the stars, are the roof to which our imagination now rises. Collar-wearing youths come out, adepts in the use of the cane and in the art of scraping their feet with meaning on the walk. They are coiled up in the hollow seats, their white, giggling faces looming oddly out of the darkness. Giggling, and with their shoulders swinging

insolently, the girls go by. They hear the scraping of feet, the rattle of canes, the subdued whistle out of the shadow, and their shoulders become twice as insolent, their giggle turns into a stare of contempt and challenge. Temptresses, they flutter off in the darkness, as though they did not hear the heavy feet of the young men hurrying on the gravel behind them. Here is the revelry of love, of love that burns as busily as a catherine-wheel, and lasts no longer. The fine anthem of it, I believe, is contained in a song of Harry Lauder's, called 'Will ye stop yer ticklin', Jock.' I know I have heard this song whistled more often than any other in the beer-gardens of Hampstead, where the young men and their lady friends fill the sheds with their laughing. But the sun is blown out, you see, and the eyes of gas-lamps are weary eyes, and do not look brightly on the folk-songs of a comelier world. Still, even gas-lamps have a beauty of their own. If one gives the go-by to love, and stands under the pines near the Spaniard's-road, one obtains a pleasant sight of illuminated suburbs in the distance. It is like a hollow of the sea, beautiful with floating lights. The moon falling on the towzled ferns is a beautiful sight enough. The stars flowering out on the sky remind one of times when the night was a mighty and palatial affair. But the lights of town seen over a space of country come with a

more poignant and personal appeal. They are the lights of the fires towards which we have all rushed, and always shall rush, to be singed. They are more to us than the sun and moon and the scattered procession of the stars. They symbolize aptly enough modern ambitions and modern loves and modern creeds.

On Grumbling.

(Written during the heat of summer.)

THE farmer, one hears, is the prince of grumblers. If the rain is long and insistent, he warmly agitates for a change to drying winds and sunlight. Should heat mellow the fruit and prepare the spread lint for binding and stacking, he will point to the cracks in the soil and to the corn that is parched and pale and empty as a dude's head, demanding if a drought so wanting in discrimination is to be borne patiently. The farmer, however, though we laugh at his complaints, is not alone in protesting against the endless fire of sunlight that has lately been burning us. I know an Australian who can smoke a pipe in it with his overcoat on; but that is because it fills his mind with suggestions of May and home, and, memories being always more pleasant and beautiful things than the circumstances that bring them forth, he must be forgiven the effrontery of his comfortableness. Few of us, however, have either the Australian's excuses or

his delight. The air is tremulous with butterflies, and our neighbours are browning by the porches of the sea; the bees are swinging up country lanes with music; the droning cockchafers carry the tradition of the bees nearer the darkness; the clouds are crimson and embellished for heralding the twilight; and all Nature seems gold and full of peace. And yet there is no content in us. The Australian has the habit of these things, and so is quiet friends with them. More inured, however, to the whips of the rain and coldness, we looked forward lustfully, beseechingly, to these scorpions of sunlight. Now we have got them, we realise that their chastisement is more terrible than rain storms. It has been but a thankless leap out of the shower bath into the fire.

It is the old story, I suppose, of disillusionment. Our joy lies in aiming at that which we have not—seldom in attaining it. There is a picture we all know of a child bending out of a bath, his whole forces concentrated upon the possession of a cake of soap which lies on the floor beyond his grasp. The motto beneath the picture declares that the infant will not be happy until the soap is in his keeping. True enough. But will he be happy even then? Not every baby is acquainted with the pinchbeck ends of soap—more likely, he spreads out his fingers after it, conceiving it to be some toy or a sweetmeat. And, poorly as soap

discharges the functions of a toy, it is still less desirable as a sweetmeat. Dear child, miserable as you already look, I pray that you may lie infinitely long over your bath's edge, howling, and with the soap still unimperilled and secure from the extensions of your dimpled fist! I, too, have eaten soap and know the flavour of it; and better it is, I swear to you, to be in a tearful passion for a deceiving show, than having made trial and discovery of its falseness, to sink into the attitude of a grumbler, and have sad brows. It is wiser, my baby, to cry for the distant moon than for a cake of soap close by, for we are more certain the moon will never be within the compass of our arms. Or, if you are bent upon soap at all costs, then turn it into bubbles, and learn at the doom of each iridescent globe of nothingness that life is a playing-ground of transient things, and only to be enjoyed after this sort. There is disappointment everywhere except for those who, recognising that substances are not inhabitants or even passing visitors here, shake hands like gratified intimates with shadows and dreams.

But we direct our hopes to things which may be in part realised, whether a companionable wife, or power in the State, or a fine summer. It is the smallness, not the magnitude, of our ideals that produces all our grumbling. We conceived the ideal wife or day or position, and we knew very

well that, granted one or all of these, we should never cease from happiness. We find, however, in what we call real life, that the lady of our dreams may be thrown out of temper for a whole evening by an excessive pinch of pepper dropped in the soup. We discover, too, that the place in which we had longed to tower above our fellows—drawing up their affections as the sun attracts the bosom of the waters, and, like the sun, shedding favours on the noble and the poor—is but a new centre for the jealousies of others and the birthplace of a wonderful mistrust with which we now begin to view a squabbling and mendicant world. Nor does the summer day we had sworn by square with our expectations. Whether the blame rests with ourselves or with the warmth of the hours, we are disappointed with the comeliness of blue skies and suns that sink in a windless flame. We desired to have done with smoke and the need of ulsters and chattering teeth, to quit the corner of the fire for the open fields, gay with birds and the sun. Well, we have escaped chattering teeth and cold toes, and what are we the better? Our heads are dull and in pain, our bodies relaxed and streaming, and our throats make piteous efforts with icy drinks to call back the winter. How our thoughts wallow in the notion of a wet road, of a gushing kennel! Were we poets we would compare the perfect beauty and joy just now, not to the sun and

the moon and the sultry stars, but to a drizzle of rain that hides the sea, or to a wet storm blowing down hoardings and loud with falling slates. However, the imagined day of wetness is sure to follow in due season. And, seeing it will fill our bones with rheumatism, we shall grumble at it even more loudly than at the sun that has been dissipating our forces so long.

The human race, I think, deserves credit for the bravery with which, in face of all its disillusionments, it clings to its old ideals. The burnt child, they say, dreads the fire, but greyer people are not so simply to be turned from their purposes. The wisest of men lose one sharp-tongued wife only to seek out and embrace with joy another equally uncongenial. The wealthy man grows conscious of the vanity of riches, but, were he to be cast in bankruptcy, he would doggedly set to on the morrow and pile up a huge fortune again. We always trust that we have been unlucky in the particular example of Dead Sea fruit that we have so far tasted; we hope to find the promised flavour and contentment in a future mouthful. We grumble at the present and detest it, but we reach out passionately after a future which is certain to be no less a cause for grumbling. And so, in three months or more, we shall be sighing for those halcyon days upon which lawyers sat in the courts without wigs, and the thermometer showed ninety

in the shade. Well, it is good to have had even the imagination of these things. Our grumbling is but a belated acknowledgment of a perfection that is reserved for another world than this.

Prophets in the Park.

I WENT into Hyde Park on an autumn evening to listen to the preachers. In the spaces of the Marble Arch, a Christy Minstrel type laid himself out over the bar of his preaching-chair. Under a wide-awake hat, his old face, framed in a grizzled Uncle-Tom beard, beamed with all human kindness. A handkerchief was tied loosely round his neck, and his frock-coat fell negligent and shabby. 'D'ye see?' he would anxiously inquire, as he made his points, of his trio of an audience. Waving a tired-looking umbrella in the air, he called upon myself and the other two to put an immediate end to the iniquitous land system of England, 'w'ereby the *hearl* can *hidle* and the workeen-man is left to staw-awve.' 'Hare you—goeen—to let—this—to continue?' he roared, in stressed syllables, at us; and so wildly did he mishandle his wretched gamp, that I beat a retreat for my nose's sake. Not far off, a Gallio in a silk hat and spectacles—for all the world like an itinerant drug-

seller—dallied, in an intimate, merry way, with sacred things. From a mobile mouth, like an actor's, he drawled out pleasant little profanities such as I should not care to put on paper. Evidently a debate with a Christian was on the boards. 'My Christian friend,' murmured Gallio, with ever so comical a droop of the eyelids, 'says that every d'y'—he spread out his arms and spoke in a solemn, mock-tragic manner—'there is a great pawssing aw'y.' The urging crowd around the platform shook with laughter to the sides. 'There is,' the lecturer drew himself up decisively. 'I've noticed it,' and he paused for a slow look round the audience. His lip and eye came nearer to each other. 'Especially,' he raised his voice so that none of us might miss the point of his witticism, 'especially on Satu'd'y, when I'm p'ying the rent.' Then he rose on his toes, and waved his arms helplessly. 'There's 'ardly a 'yp'ny left,' he cried. Clearly, from the cheers of his followers, he had solved something or other.

A not uneducated person in close neighbourhood held the house of the evening. Between two pink-globed electric lamps, his head tossed back dramatically, he fingered the notes of a discourse. Hardly was he on the neck of his exordium, when an evangelical group at his elbow set up a squalling. He flung down his notes and patted the desk in front of him irritably. The hymn at an

end, his oration bubbled again. Not ten words had he slipped when, bang, came another of Sankey's. He chewed his red Scottish moustache in a fury. 'Fr-riends,' he ground out, in a constrained calm, 'if this noise continues, I will ask you to sing William Morr-ris's Hymn of Toil.' A third effort at speech was lost in a fresh whirl of singing. In a fine temper by this time, the lecturer turned his attention to God, to whom he made a few sarcastic references. Then he informed us, his frame quivering, that at the next election he was going to accept a safe seat in Parliament. The length of the hymn put him at last into a very ecstasy of anger. 'Fr-riends,' he yelled, thumping his desk as the choir broke out into a fortissimo, 'if ever-r the Boer-rs fight against the British again, I—mean—to go out and help—them—to win!' Someone in the crowd reached him a bottle of soda-water. After a long drain at it, he rearranged his notes for the evening's lecture.

Not yet, however, were his gospel and the confines of light to know one another. A Calvinistic figure among the evangelicals stepped up to oblige with a solo. His voice wavered between the grating of a bassoon and the drone of a scutching-mill. His first bars were welcomed with a shout of laughter. The singer paused in the middle of a line. 'Listen to the devil roaring,' he groaned. 'Ah, my friends, the devil goes about like a roaring

lion!' 'Fr-riends,' shrieked the sceptic, 'he calls us devils. Christian char-rity!' Amid a bedlam the hymn began again. Again it was followed by a tumult. The singer, now as wild as the sceptic, turned on the crowd furiously. 'That lecturer there,' he bellowed, pointing at the Scotchman, 'is just like Saul of Tarsus before he was converted. He would knock me down if he could, and put me in prison.' 'No, my fr-riend,' interrupted the other, blandly, 'not in prison; in a lunatic asylum.' 'He would kill me,' cried the Calvinist to the heavens; 'he would——' The stagger of laughter that followed drove him back on his singing again. 'My thirsty soul is satisfied,' he droned, with his eyes cast up towards heaven. A shout of delight greeted this. 'Pity the pubs ain't shut a Sund'ys,' guffawed someone. The singer retorted, and the insult sheathed in his retort stung the infidels to madness. 'Ow, gow to blyzes!' protested someone. 'Yes, gow to blyzes!' chorused several excitedly, and a fanatical sceptic struck forward to do bodily harm to the Christian. Then there was push and shout and ululation—all the elements of a free fight, in fact. 'Devil'—'devil'—'devil,' was all the wording that I could make out clearly. A big Irishman at my side glanced down helplessly at me. 'Oh!' he sighed; 'hell mend the two of them!'

The Consolations of London.

TRY as I will, I shall never be at home in London. I still walk in a shy spirit among her streets, and lower my eyes timidly as I pass under the cold brows of her churches. The curious utterance of her people falls on my ear like a strange music—like the whimpering of wind in twisted caves—and I become so absorbed in considering the quality of the sound, that I often miss carrying away more than a fraction of the meaning. I am listening to a foreign and jangling tongue; and the little dark men who swing out of the doors of the public houses, greasy, merry, and profane, seem to me foreign and grotesque figures, more unintelligible than shadows. This it is to be an alien, a Gascon, an intruder. The women who tumble down Piccadilly in chariots in the afternoon, flying with boas and their eyelids falling drowsily, are of an aloof and marble sort that accord uneasily with my memories of blue gowns and unaffected walking and generous and simple lips. I can mix with as little intimacy with the careless-shouldered girls

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who come out when it is past evening, and have the tall violet lamps for their moon and stars. The passing of these human substances into the gloom is accomplished with a solemn picturesqueness, a pathos of silence that must appeal to anyone who loves beauty in all its forms. Still, my attitude towards the fantastic and endless carnival of the streets remains one of perplexity, of loss.

I will not deny that there is a certain pleasure in being thus a stranger, separate, childlike, and amazed, amid the phosphorescent and moving show of London. To be a stranger is to be an adventurer, and the thrill of adventure may be had in a heady enough draught at the sight of the Thames sweeping, dappled with light and shadow, under the arches of Waterloo Bridge in the grey of evening. There is the beauty of the London squares, too, when a spring rain has fallen and left the trees green and shining, as though some nymph-like spirit had descended and put on the leaves for a revealing garment. George Moore, if I remember, has noted this beauty, and paid honour to it. Felicien Rops, a more corrosive artist in line than is even George Moore in prose, once discovered in London a much less reputable source of delight. It was in the days when Seven Dials was old and narrow-veined and full of stench and beautiful with wickedness. The

haggard and octopus-like forms he saw there—hideous and unseemly reelers through the night, deniers of the Holy Ghost in their crouched bodies and filthy laughter—inhabited for him a kind of inverted paradise. It was with difficulty that he tore himself away at last from so curiously enchanting a slum. It was as though Saint George, on approaching the dragon, had become so absorbed in the contemplation of its green scales and flaming eyes, that he wished no longer to fight with it, but merely to sit before it as a lover, and to gaze on its evil beauty for ever. The sheer artistic emotion, however, such as Rops felt, adventurous though it be, is, in the end, not satisfying. Unless one is morally, intellectually and spiritually comfortable—in a greater or less degree—in the atmosphere in which one lives, one is leading a restless and mutilated life. This is the point at which one ceases to figure as an adventurous stranger, and harbours, instead, the complaining spirit of an exile.

Not even books endeared with stains and loosening covers, or the kind faces of friends, can diminish in any large measure this sense of unfitness, of incompatibility, in an atmosphere that has not conquered the heart. My very pipe, easting up its slow hosts of smoke in the air, a company of cherubs, cannot bid me be at home with any hope of finding me obedient. Nor will the enchantment

of melodies played upon flutes and violins serve, or the unfolding of the colour of the world in a rain-storm of Turner's or a Nativity of Filippo Lippi's, or the mimicry of a life that never was, the mimicry one finds amid the crude lights of the modern stage. Perhaps, I may achieve a moment of pleasure in a theatre, or a music-room, or a picture gallery, and imagine that I have reached at last some precinct of peace. The illusion dies, however, at the voice of my neighbours; they have a trick in the carriage of their heads that reminds me sharply that I am an interloper and cannot understand, and, not understanding, cannot sympathise in full.

I do not know what would happen to me if I had never the opportunity of quitting London, and walking again in the fields that I love so much better. I should require to be absent still oftener were it not for two sounds that come sometimes at night, and haunt my room with the music of persuasive spirits. I could scarcely live if the wind never blew out of the west and made the trees in my garden murmur. This is my very great consolation on loud and restless nights. On nights on which a vast silence broods I have another intrusive sound to comfort me. There is a railway line skirting somewhere near the back of the house in which I live, and trains pass along it with inquisitive whistlings through the night. As I lie, sheeted in my bed and awake, with my

window fully open—like an ear awaiting some beautiful utterance—I listen expectantly for the approaching sound of their wheels. I thrill with joy as the sound increases to a triumphant thunder; I sigh with regret as it dies out again into a whisper of nothingness. For the leaping of wind among the branches of trees, and the redundant thud of huge engines upon the line, have one great quality of sound in common; each of them recalls by its music the prolonged and insistent roar of waves that cast themselves endlessly under pale stars on a long and desolate strand. They recall this strand that is my life to me almost more intimately than would the sight of the strand itself.

If to remember passionately be the highest success in life, then am I in debt to London for its winds and its railway trains, for they have put me rapturously in mind of things that I do not seem to have appreciated at their right value before. They free my spirit like a magical wand, or like some happy momentary death, and bid it wander by the edge of the waters that it loves as a man might love the bright hair of his mistress. If you wish to know why I love those waters and the pools on the sand where the moon shines, I will not tell you. Indeed, I cannot tell you. The love of a place, like the love of a woman, will not bear discussion in the streets. I do not even say that my place is the most beautiful of all possible

places. I say only that it is the most beautiful for me. The world is full of different sweetnesses, each of them appealing to different tastes and sorts of emotion. There may be some Londoner lying awake at night in the houses near my shore and praying to God for a fog, or a song from the music-halls, or a Cockney accent, to remind him of his soul's home again. Well, I pity him for his ignorance. But I understand his feeling very well.

The Amusement of Boxing.

THERE was once a champion boxer, called Jem Mace, who beat all the other champion boxers in the civilised world. Jem Mace is old enough now to be considered among the demi-gods. Seventy-four years of age set a man creditably enough upon a pedestal for a younger and unproved generation to look up to, bareheaded. I went out one evening last week to Kennington, where Jem Mace was expected to return to the boxing ring for a few exhibition rounds. As I climbed the stairs of the Horns' Assembly Rooms I confess to thrilling quietly with anticipation.

The hall in which Mace's carnival was to come off was a long room, with a gallery at one end and a small stage at the other, and, I believe, is generally used for dancing. On my arrival the gallery was already well filled. Most of those who sat in it were young men of the sort who wear caps, and had as soon wrap their necks in handkerchiefs as in collars. They all smoked with a sportsman's arrogance of look. They were subdued in talk,

however, for the body of the hall was as yet chillingly empty, containing a mere sprinkling of the wealthier sort of patrons. Slowly and slowly and slowly others slipped in among the chairs. One was an old man—a Tom Pinch of eighty years, to judge by his face—the only excitement of whose early manhood had probably lain in following the victories of Jem Mace. Another was tall and insolent-headed, rich in astrakhan embellishments and with a racecourse loudness of waistcoat showing under his open coat. He was the kind of fellow that lords would have mixed with a century ago, fearless in his eyes, an artist in sport, and with the body of a fighter. An aged man, with a shabby coat and sodden features, began to boast near me, as he lifted a match to his pipe with trembling fingers, how he, too, had fought in these rooms twenty years ago.

It seemed as though the boxing would never begin. The boys in the gallery set to tramping, and the wise men on the floor to whispering that the police had forbidden the entertainment. Meanwhile, the management resolved that we should be amused. The little Tich of the neighbourhood, heavy of lips and lisping and blue-clothed, came out on the stage in a yachting cap, and uttered song and patter, in which little dwarfish fellows figured as the heroes. One of his choruses ran like this:

Oh! I'm little but I'm good,
And I'd have it understood
(Tra-la-la, etc., I forget this line).
I can tell a bloomin' lie,
And I'm fond of rabbit pie,
And I'm as good as any big one.

Having howled this in the storm-voice of a giant, he swept off his cap, and went into a side room amid a handful of cheers. Two other singers followed him, one of them giving an alleged Irish song with a 'Killiecrankie' air that set all the feet in the hall tramping time, and the throats shrilling with imitated Highland cries. You ceased to be able to hear the words amid the tumult of jeers and laughter. You only saw the singer's grin, and his battered hat, and his sideways head, and his lips moving doubtfully. If you had a sense of humour, you did not laugh, you pitied him.

This kind of thing gave way as Jem Mace's manager, red and husky and blue-eyed, came out behind the foot-lights. No sooner had he opened his lips, hidden under a sunset of moustache, than we knew the worst. The police would have none of us. And so forth, and so forth. And we were to have a fine concert, instead. In spite of the announcement, the piano set up a triumphal tune, and two men of worthy age stepped before us. They were wearing boxing gloves, and had the air

of fighters. One of them was thick-set, and full in the stomach, and with eyes of a dampish twinkle set on either side of his nose. His head was bent slightly forward, as though his neck were not too supple, and a black moustache swept over his mouth with stains of white running through it. He wore a singlet, and a pair of cricketing trousers. Solid and easy and smiling, he was introduced to us as Jem Mace, and our enthusiasm had no limits. His opponent was a man of many yards, and stout to boot. Collarless, white-shirted, with a great kerchief round his middle, he also was a champion of sorts. Jem and he shook hands with each other, moving slowly and smiling. Jem hit the big man a pat on the face, and the big man touched Jem lightly on the neck. One heard Jem's breath coming and going as the other would come close to him and beat a hurried tattoo low on his ribs. Jem would reply to this by folding the big man's cheeks between his fists, the other meanwhile smiling vaguely and tenderly. Each had his turn at attack. It was as though two resurrected kittens were playing.

The house, beginning with a titter of hesitation, soon saw how comical the battle was. From a titter it went to a laugh, from a laugh to a roar, from a roar to the glad cheers that bring water to the eyes. Every minute the thing became more ridiculous, when the judge, with a grave face, cried 'Time!'

and the two men flung themselves into chairs, a couple of attendants fanning them with towels as ardently as though the poor fellows had been exhausted in a fight for their honours or their lives. The fighters lay back, their arms hanging limply, and their mouths inhaling the air for all they were worth. The second round was shorter than the first, and the third than the second. At the end of the third the stout and aged fighters seemed hardly to have the energy to raise their fists. Seeing this, the grave judge again cried 'Time!' Bowing and panting and sweating, the fighters disappeared amid a scene of enthusiastic delight. When a lady had sung and two semi-naked fellows had slapped each other about a little, the red manager appeared again, and said the police had threatened, if the boxing did not stop, to jump on the stage and put an end to it themselves. He had, however, at great trouble and expense, arranged as good a programme, etc., and he was sure those present would not be too hard on the old sportsman, Jem Mace, ex-champion of the world, and himself. Loud and sentimental cheers were his reward. One daring and cold-blooded fellow cried out something about getting his money back. Roars of disgust, however, drowned his voice. Laughing and hooting, and feeling they had done a good turn to a grand old man, the boys went downstairs into the bar.

The Return of Henry Irving.

SIR HENRY IRVING has come back to town, and appeared at the Drury Lane Theatre on Saturday night as Becket. This was surely one of the most exciting events that have taken place in London for some years. The reason may be that playgoers are an excitable race, more shrill and demonstrative in their love than deacons or common people. Certainly those ladies were very deeply in love with great acting, who came with their camp-stools to the pit doors of the theatre between seven and eight o'clock on Saturday morning. Once I, too, was nearly capable of this kind of thing. Now, however, I should almost as soon think of jumping into the sea after a drowning woman, or of doing some tremendous deed of heroism, as of sacrificing my sinews in this slow torture of waiting. The sincere playgoer, however, shows some of the patient heroism of the demi-god. Few men would do as much for the women with whom they are in love as the playgoer will do out of devotion to a great actor. To sit on a camp-stool

and read Marie Corelli for twelve hours in a wet wind—to starve on sandwiches all day, while a replete world passes by along the pavement, merry with its food—to battle against the cramp in one's limbs, and the stiffening of the muscles in one's back, and the agony of remaining in one place all the time—no man will go through all this for his mistress, and afterwards take her in his arms with any enthusiasm. One marvels all the more that a body of men and women, ordinarily handsome and ordinarily wise, can be found able to survive so great a test for an actor's sake, and, at the end of it, to leap with enthusiasm at the sight of him, like hounds overjoyed at the coming of a master who has stayed away too long. On Saturday night Sir Henry Irving won so vast a tribute of love. 'Only my blood speaks to you in my veins,' he quoted from the middle of the stage. The blood in the veins of the audience was lyrical. Standing under a tremulous roof of waved handkerchiefs and shaken hats, the creatures screamed, yelled, ejaculated, hooted, gibbered, with their faces red and wet, and their eyes bulging. Penelope cannot have misbehaved herself so admirably when Ulysses returned among the suitors, a kingly man, strong and capable and with heroic brows.

There was a great babble going on in Drury-lane when I arrived on Saturday night. Each of the four galleries carried its full cluster of human

beings—like swarming bees for the noise they made. The gold boxes were rapidly filling with white breasted men, and with women in a medley of dress. A crowd was pouring into the stalls in a disordered tide, and a moving head here and there was a mark for the comments of those who love to know even by sight moderately famous people. One was aware of a distinct atmosphere in the house—an atmosphere of which wide-awake eyes, and restless arms and talking, and sudden laughter were the symbols. One felt something of the excitement one feels when a thunderstorm is looming. The leader of the orchestra raised his bâton. A preliminary roll of thunder began in the top gallery, as if in answer. To put it vividly the gallery broke out like a fight at a fair. I do not know the cause of the uproar, but everybody seemed to be clamouring and bellowing at cross purposes. The house stood on its feet and craned up to discover what was the matter. Gradually the shouting died away, and the audience sat down to await in patience the rising of the curtain.

Sir Henry Irving was the fine lightning flash that gave all this thunderous business its justification. Long and lean and ashen, he stood with his hand at his heart, accepting the noisiest welcome I have ever seen in London. In the early parts of the play he had no duty but to be decorative and dignified.

He represented Becket, the tired soldier, the chancellor playing at chess with the hot-tempered king, and his mouth was full of words that scarcely mattered. And yet how dominant, how charged with fate, was the figure that made the kings and the queens about him seem puppets or pigmies! None of the other actors have Irving's trick of listening with alive eyes to the conversation of his stage neighbours. Every muscle on his drawn face is a trained soldier to do his bidding. His brows have a range of expression that belongs to few other men's arms and voices. Those long fingers of his—sometimes his hands seem to consist of fingers through all their length—can speak despair or tenderness or passion; and, if he turns his back on the house, the pride of the world or the patience stands or stoops with his altered bearing. There is no getting at the secret of such acting as this. It is high genius—genius such as goes to the making of a lyric, or of a symphony, or of a picture full of colour and light. A more Protean genius, perhaps, than any of these, for Irving is many-coloured as the earth itself. Pathos and humour and foulness and splendid passion are but a few of the flowers—the flowers and weeds—that inhabit the garden of his capacity. No limelight, making him the luminous centre of the stage, is required to bring all eyes to gather in wonder about his old head. Other men tear passions to tatters;

he builds passions into a beautiful poem. His neighbours converse as dully as a newspaper; he makes of the barest dialogue a delightful and varied tapestry. Others utter the hollow and tinny laughs of the stage; his laughter comes like notes played on an orchestra of gnomes, or, if he likes it, of the brave spirits of pagan gods. Only the middle-class in emotions remain conscious that his step is jerky, his pronunciation full of mannerisms, his elocution strangely broken and volcanic.

'Becket' does not, of course, give him a chance of displaying all his moods. It is a mere series of loose theatrical scenes, showing how a man, brave in his religious faith, postpones loyalty to his king to loyalty to his God, and dies, in consequence, a blessed martyr. Humility and the bravery that places men among the stars, however, were never so finely represented on the stage in our day. See him confronted by the king's friends—bishops, and soldiers, and barons, full of hatred and with their swords gleaming. Again and again, the conditions of submission to the king are laid before him. Swathed in black, and pale, and with holiness dwelling on his tonsured head, he repeats again and again, 'And that I will not sign,' to each of the conditions. How often he repeats the same form of words! Yet never does he repeat it with exactly the same intonation, the same pregnancy. Lowly and pitifully as a child he says it. Boldly and

quietly, as a man, he speaks it. Then, rising upon the storm of their curses, he is once more the vivid lightning, the flash of God seen above the tempest; and, with spread arms, more terrible than Jonah in despair, he stands with his breast defenceless, naked, calling upon the base lords near him to 'Strike! strike! strike!' Here is one of the choice moments of modern acting. Nothing in 'Becket' matters except moments such as this. A luminous figure in the gloom, a planet among dull earthly fires, Irving marches as magnificently to the last scene in the transept of Canterbury Cathedral where he falls on the altar-steps by the sword of cut-purse-hearted fellows. This is a death indeed—a death aptly marked by the thunders and the awful silence that the thunders leave behind them. One can merely grow ecstatic over work of so tremendous, so phosphorescent, a vitality. Human beings shouted over it in Drury Lane till their lips were dry and their throats sore. It was an orgy of enthusiasm, a bacchanalianism of love, and a comment most suited to the reappearance of Henry Irving on the London stage.

A Note on Piccadilly.

PICCADILLY draws the young men who speak English from all parts of the earth, like some blessed fairyland. The haunt of pleasure, of laughter, of the fleeting and less serious colours of the world, it appeals irresistibly to all who are eager for the easiest way of escape from the heart-breaking facts of life. There have been no great poets of Piccadilly, and I do not know why, for it must have been the scene of some very real and surprising emotions. One finds life passing along here in dædal garments that, at least to the observer, are full of interest and charm. There is the very shine of pleasure on the faces of those who pass by—a foolish and unrewarding pleasure, perhaps, but none the less real on that account. The men and women are worshippers in the colonnade of a fantastic temple. They are bigots in the cause of joy, fanatical devotees of the goddess of laughter; and one cannot be a bigot or a fanatic in regard to anything, be it ever so unwise or so unholy, and remain uninteresting to one's observant neighbours.

Contrast one of the bars between Piccadilly and Leicester Square with the ordinary public-house in the suburbs. In the suburbs the public-house is often a kind of tradesmen's club. It is full of men who have abandoned all high interest in life—resigned and submissive creatures who will never again have the impulse to go out and do battle in behalf of delight. They seem like beings without souls—dim and unreal figures whose heads nod before it is evening. A penny-in-the-slot instrument may waken them up at intervals with a tune, like 'Navaho' or 'Down South.' But their exuberance dies away as the air comes to an end, and they turn back to their chatter about horses and politics with a greater listlessness than ever. It must be terrible to be weary like this—to feel that life is only so much putting-in of time until the hour for going to bed arrives. This is the real infidel philosophy. In the yellow light of the suburban bars—a light which is really but a gaudy gloom—no dancing thoughts could live. Here is the edge of limbo. The thud of the beer-pulls is a sound as suggestive of tragic happenings as the knocking at the door in 'Macbeth'; and the swing-doors groan on their hinges, heavy sentinels against joy.

The bars in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly are different. They are only a fool's paradise, perhaps; but surely in a commonplace world there is something of achievement in being any kind of

a paradise at all. One thrills at least with a mild excitement as one views the well-dressed procession of fools in the West End. One cannot see gold being poured out like water without a very pronounced beating of the heart. One would be lying to oneself if one said that here one tasted the real wine of life, but the imitation is so excellent that one does not pause to moralise. Thousands of long articles have been written on Paris as a city of pleasure. The respectable people who read Omar Khayyám become shocked if London is shown following quite ardently a local adaptation of the Persian's philosophy. They imagine that human beings cannot eat Dead Sea apples prettily except on the Continent. They regard the numerous cafés and lounges in the West End, not only as evil places, but as unfit subjects for a decent man's interest.

Yet there are cafés in London that you cannot enter without becoming infected with a certain merriment. You go downstairs into one of them, and find a multitude of draped tables rich with pewter-lidded mugs of beer and a company of hilarious people gathered round them, pit-a-pat with conversation that mixes with the music of the little mid-air orchestra. There are painted cheeks here, and the thin, white faces of some of the men tell what a heavy penalty one must always pay for amusing oneself in unphilo-

sophical ways. One cannot but be charmed, however, by the confusion of good nature that dwells within the grotesque German walls of the place. Possibly, girls ought not to smoke cigarettes in public. Probably, little boys from the City ought to save up their sixpences and buy the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' instead of spending them on the most harmless of beers. One cannot always look at life, however, from the point of view of the staid citizen. That would be intolerant and immoral. Sometimes, I think, it is well to look at one's neighbours merely as the decorative figures in a changing picture. One must capture something of joy from the spectacle even of other people's sins and miseries. One must sometimes change the ethical for the artistic interest. One does not think of morality in connection with roses or poplars blown about in the sun; and young men and women in the regalia of the pleasure-lover may be as suggestive of curious fancies. One may regard them as martyrs, too—martyrs in motley. Timid of the great adventures of the world, they yet step out along the way they have chosen, intrepid and orgiastic figures. Like Icarus, they have attempted to imitate the butterflies, and, like him, they are discovering that the thing cannot be safely done. They catch at the moments greedily, and seem to be crushing life into their

mouths with both hands, like a child suddenly let loose upon a favourite cake. One can imagine that their conception of Heaven is as a place full of hansom cabs, in which one can loll at twilight and smell roses. Everything will be done imperially. The light will be hurled violently from huge torches out of banks of shadow, and everyone will go about with a grimace and a strange gleam in the eyes. There shall be colour heaped upon colour, and melody confused with melody, and a fragrance pervading everything—a sickly cloud of fragrance that one could not endure by sunlight. This is the middling enough dream of those who have gone out to discover what life is—‘Life,’ as Mr. Kipling grimly puts it, ‘with a capital Hell.’

There is no more wonderful sight in London than the neighbourhood of Piccadilly at the time when the people are leaving the theatres. Here are visions of wonderful hair and magical cloaks, of beauty and hansoms with flickering wheels—visions that for those who are in love with the very bloom of riches have a haunting, almost an intoxicating, charm. There may be something vulgar in the reverence for wealth, but I confess I cannot see my neighbours moving about in a shifting crowd with all the symbols of great possessions on their bodies and avoid feeling a strange pleasure. I can always watch with delight the great tide of ‘buses and motors and hansom cabs being

suddenly stemmed with a great groaning of the brakes by the mere gesture of a policeman. There is something about hansom cabs, indeed, which I find quite irresistible. They are the last word in worldly pleasure, and contain the essential poetry of town life. They put a throne under human beings, and lull us into a momentary godhead. Sitting in a hansom, and borne through the overflowing crowd of muffled things on the pavement, we feel as though we were living on a different plane of being from our shambling neighbours. If I had money, I would spend days upon end driving about in a hansom cab, smoking gold-tipped cigarettes, and lifting my hat very conceitedly to all my acquaintances who passed by.

On Holidays.

THE air is just now full of holidays. Young bachelors, loosed from the desk, are flying to the railways in hansom cabs, in which they lounge back with a familiar insolence and with the ease born of a fortnight's salary drawn in advance. Laughing girls alight at the stations in white gowns, their faces ready to be burned with the sun and with happiness. Older men crowd about the ticket office, loaded with a spade and bucket that they carry awkwardly. They put on an air of self-obliteration, as who should say, 'We endure all things for the children's sake.' And yet you will observe that, let a child cry for its spade on a journey as loud as it will, only an exceptional father will yield to its clamouring. The reason is obvious. The father recognises that here is his single opportunity during the year for bearing a spade in public, and turning baby again. He dare not go out alone and dig with it when he has reached the sands, for fear of being laughed at. There the child is king of the castle in a very deep sense. In

the railway carriage, however, the spade is set down as luggage, and we older people agree to pretend that we hold and handle it, not from pleasure, but as a duty. We cheat ourselves thrillingly in this matter. If we would confess the truth to ourselves, the father is the infant's rival for the possession of the spade: it is as if they were equals and in love with the same woman. The spade, as he fondles it in his itching palm, recalls to him days of wind and clearness on which he too wore cotton breeches and braved the sea, like a later Canute, on his dwindling sand-heap. As a child, he remembers, he was a creature of impulses, lyrical and all gold; now he is an animal of fixed and confining habits, carrying the marks of the world about on him more ineradicably than the black face of a chimney-sweeper. The true holiday is just an escape from habit back into the land of impulse, where no siren blows the regular hour and meals matter less even than the morning newspaper.

In another way of putting it, the holiday is a wise, if temporary, murdering of our habits. There are cases of men who have been so fast-bound in their habits as to be indistinguishable from them, For such there can be no holiday, no release, but suicide. There was once a man who declared that life appeared to him to be a continual process of buttoning and unbuttoning and buttoning again. The monotony wearied him, and, in the

desire for a more novel experience, he put a pistol to his head. This is an example of the true holiday spirit, though I will admit it is here carried to extremes. If we do not slay our habits, and, perhaps, ourselves with them, our habits will slay us, or all in us that is worth living for. And be it noted that a good habit is a despot hardly more scrupulous than a bad one. A virtue will choke us just as readily as a vice. Even the preachers call on us to let our worship be the outcome, not of mere habit, but of an impulse towards divinity, and in this they damn the most reputable of all habits in company with the worse ones. In the early days of the world men were not chained by so many habits as ourselves, and so we never hear of them going on a holiday. Truth is, they had no need of a holiday in our sense of the word. For, living by instinct and impulse as they did, they moved towards their graves in one long and many-coloured festival.

There is nothing in which we differ more from our wandering ancestors than in our belief in the wisdom of an habitual home. We prate about the beauty of home life almost more than about the fiscal question, and are satisfied we should die without it. And yet home has done more than anything else to wall us in with staling customs. The youth who flies off in secrecy to sea is a rebel, not against the elegances and the warmth of home,

but against the load of habits that oppresses him there. Others will turn soldier, or speed out on the road as tramps, or gain a changing bed by fiddling through the towns. One and all, they are condemned by men with gold watch-chains as Ishmaelites, or, in a milder way, as Bohemians. But they are merely brave fellows who put into execution our own more timid purposes and fulfil the natural desire for altered paths. Thoreau spoke directly against the despotism of the home, which requires that a man will not go on a journey but the half of it is occupied with the homeward retracing of his steps. The rover and the wayside beggar have hearts that will not be thus restricted. Their spirits reach out to infinity, and infinity always lies beyond the farthest turn of the road, or past the highest peak of the mountain. To go holidaying is to cast our habitual ways aside like a filthy garment, and, unimpeded, to advance in the train of that infinite beauty and joy which can never be reached, but to strive after which is the largest happiness we know.

The human race has to this extent shown its wisdom that, when in search of a holiday, it turns with gladness to the sea. For the sea, with its impetuous tumble from a mood of joy to a passion of delirious unrest, represents more fitly than anything else the disorderly spread of emotions in which the holiday heart feels, in a sweet meaning,

at home. Not that a certain portion of law is not required for the pleasantest of our lives. For even the sea, I suppose, is under some final control, and that irregular fellow, the sun, who changes his time of getting up every morning, is cramped by rules as strict as those of arithmetic. We imitate this side of his nature, however, earnestly enough as it is. What remains for us to do is to reflect in our lives something of his unscrupulous hours—to copy upon our holidays the fluctuations of the chameleon sea, and the inconstant pranks of a moon that waxes and wanes.

On the Crime of Ugliness.

MR. BLISS CARMAN has, in a recent volume of essays, chosen as one of his subjects 'The Crime of Ugliness.' Unfortunately, in dealing with the matter, he has rested satisfied with mere general statements. He demands, indeed, that the taste for the beautiful shall be cultivated with the same popular energy as the moral sense and the reason. But that, so far as he is concerned, ends the business. By some kink in its composition, the world (if we exclude France from the reckoning) has never budged far forward for an abstract reason. It is not the abstract value of keeping sober that bids us pause in our drinking, but a practical and honest dread of wives, and employers, and stomachs, and magistrates. In the same way, no admonition as to the ethereal qualities of beauty will ever shift us from the habits of ugliness into which our lives have grown. Before we shall have accomplished anything, we must first have placed ugliness among the indictable offences. We do not employ or associate with a man who utterly lacks morals; in certain cases, we close him up in

a prison from the public view. If he is wanting in intelligence, we do not put him on our pay-list, or the roll of our friends; here, again, under extreme conditions, we incarcerate him, and call him an imbecile. Yet, be a man as ugly as he will, he may walk the streets and no policeman will lay a finger on him. And here is the very fellow who offends us most. I will pass a hundred men in the Strand without sense and without morals, and none of them for a minute will injure my happiness. Up struts our ugly friend, however, wearing all the challenging airs. That man has diminished my store of pleasures much more than if he had filched my handkerchief, or dug up my garden for hidden treasure. Yet the sneak-thief and the maniac pay the penalty of crimes. The other fellow strides roughshod over our sore eyes to esteem and prosperity. We put a premium upon ugliness when we penalised bad sense and bad morals, and omitted to draw bad appearances within the net of our punishment. The result might have been foretold. Most of us are moral, and many are intelligent, but only a handful—they might almost be counted on the fingers—can honestly be described as beautiful.

If ugliness were the gift of some bad fairy that presides at cradles, there would be nothing more to be said on the matter. There is no doubt, however, that it springs from a cause more easily extermin-

able. The truth is, we have come in a perverted way to look on it as a masculine virtue, and will have no truck with being beautiful. In the days of the heroes, all men were beautiful; it was as natural as to be brave. The man who was not personable is in the legends of every people an exception, and serves merely as a foil to his marble-limbed, large-eyed companions. When the Preacher declared that God had made men upright, but they had sought out many inventions, he might have joined loveliness with rectitude among the original endowments of the race. Woman has for the most part cultivated this primal gift, and brought it to a perfect bloom. It has been said that all women are beautiful, only some are more so. But this is merely the result of determination in the choice of an ideal. My lady walks in the full tide of summer with a fur boa entwining her arms and body like an oppressive snake. And do you think that in this she has any aim at being comfortable? There could be no notion more absurd. Woman, indeed, has perceived the eternal truth that happiness is but an accident in the world's medley, and that no end is worth following but some lofty matter, such as goodness, or wisdom, or holiness, or beauty. We cannot get happiness by striving after it, and yet with an effort we can impart it. This is woman's great benevolence, that she will become a martyr for beauty, so that the

world may have pleasure. Strong in this purpose, she endures all—the corset and the cosmetic, the trailing skirt, the boa, and the high-heeled shoe. She will pass hours before the glass, toiling assiduously as a Kitchener over his plans, a Stevenson among his words, or a missionary building up a heathen tribe in a better faith. What poet, or preacher, or statesman ever wrought harder for the weal of his fellows? Woman, by the daily relinquishment of her happiness and her hours, will stand to a wise posterity for the pattern of the true idealist. Shall we not praise her now? Shall we not emulate her?

I see no hope for men but that they should take Narcissus for their model, and live with the mirror in front of them. 'Know thyself' was the motto in which the Greeks summed up the prerequisite of all human advancement, and until we have come to a knowledge of our form and features we are not likely greatly to improve our appearance. There are in the meanest of us shadows and relics of beautifulness, which with sedulous culture we may bring to something of worth. But we must first of all have the courage to face the glass and risk the most dreaded of all accusations, the accusation of effeminacy. The poet with hair down his shoulders, whom the streets call after on his way, is endued with a kind of daring that many a brave general might envy. There are travellers who fear

to own delicate hands more than to meet a lion, and soldiers who would rather lose a limb than gain a beautiful nose by artificial methods. How are we to withstand this rush of the spirit of ugliness which overbears us in a sea of tall hats and close-cropped hair and severe garments? The lovers of beauty must unite in a league, and carry out some great propagandist work through the country. They must demand the extermination of the bulldog and the dismantling of the cheap villa, both of which are responsible for a deal of our contentment amid ugliness. The members of the league must demand beauty as a first qualification in candidates for all public positions. Is not the grim and terrible air of a law court due in a large measure to the fact that there are so few beautiful barristers and judges? You insist upon loveliness in the chorus-girls in a musical comedy; why should you dispense with it in that much less entertaining person, the Member of Parliament? I think if women had the suffrage matters would go better there. For a woman would vote for a handsome man more readily than for a man who was only wise or honest. But probably women will not be put on the register. And so we shall continue on our declining way, firmly persuaded that insolent manners are the token of a sturdy independence, and that indifference to personal beauty only shows some golden superiority of the masculine heart and head.

Lawn Tennis in the Suburbs.

I OFTEN wish I had been brought up to clerking or some decent business. It is only clerks and farmers and working men who seem to have any leisure time to themselves. That is why I believe in a state of society in which every man would be compelled to put in a limited number of hours' work in the field or the factory or the office. It is only by submission to some such slavery of the clock that we can ever gain the liberty to be idle. Compare, for instance, the face of a clerk with that of a clergyman or a journalist. The clergyman and the journalist have no settled hours of toil, and so they have no settled hours of leisure. They run about with a worn look—the jaws of neurotics and melancholy eyes. The clerk, however, leads a life regulated by the clock, and the face of a grandfather's clock is a symbol of his consequent cheerfulness. He knows that at five o'clock or so he will be a free man without another duty to attend to until nine or ten of the following morning. No wonder that he goes about with a wide, smiling

mouth! No wonder that his waistcoats are audacious, and betoken a gay view of life! We who have no moments, except stolen ones, that we can call our own, may well envy him his good fortune.

I envy the City clerk more than anything else his journey from narrow central closes out among the trees of a suburb, and the game of lawn-tennis he plays after he has eaten his dinner and smoked the most liberal pipe of the day. Clothed in flannels and a blazer, he swings up the road to his club or to the courts in some public park, beating the wind testingly every now and then with his racquet. I was out in Waterlow Park in Highgate the other night, and watched the boys at their games for a time. Here several nets were stretched across the ground, and a medley of old men, young men, and girls ran hither and thither on the grass. Every evening during the summer Waterlow Park is gay and musical with Highgate people who have escaped from stools and counters into the white world of lawn-tennis. I envy them in my soul, for to me lawn-tennis and lacrosse seem the most beautiful games in the world. Not that I would rise out of my indolence and play either of them. Nature made me too crooked and melancholy-jointed for that. I love them merely for what they bring to the eye, for the gentle emotions with which they come and stimulate the spirit. I suppose, indeed,

I love all games that are played in the sun, and that require the players to appear in white and exhilarating costumes. And yet I swear that, contrasted with lacrosse and lawn-tennis, cricket is not a game to be praised at all. The cricket field is a staid place, and rarely the scene of movements that have the quality of flashes. So still are the players through many a dreary over that, though they have much of the comeliness of lilies, they are too often like lilies grouped in a rather meaningless and uninteresting way. On the tennis court one is never faced by this exhausting immobility. Coming hither from the cricket ground, one feels as though one had left a beautiful stagnant pool, and come down to an open sea, whose breasts and lips are all laughter. Talk as we will about consistency and the rest of it, we are in love with the things that change swiftly. One cannot care for a steady oil-lamp as one cares for the lights that drift above the grave of the sun on the edge of evening. There must be something of the quality of lilt, of irresponsibility, in the things we love most passionately. That is why the world has always been enamoured of the sea and the sky and genius and women of baffling moods. That, too, is why the world—or, if not the world, myself and a good many others—can never grow weary of looking at a game of lawn-tennis. Here are brilliant green and vivid white whirled and shifted

into a thousand shapes more strange than may be seen in any kaleidoscope.

Perhaps another of the delights of the lawn-tennis court is that here one may behold girls running and laughing with free voices. I will not say that modern girls run gracefully, any more than modern boys run gracefully. When they run, their skirts beat against their limbs with a sound like the thud of churns, and are enemies to an easy obedience to Nature. Still, in their running, they show themselves determined cherishers of their liberty. Before they take hold of their racquets they throw down a little of their respectability, and their bodies at once become more flexible and expressive and gay. The English people have for a long time denied themselves a great deal of the beauty of gestures. They have resolved that perfect gentlemen shall go about the world like tree trunks walking, and that the perfect lady shall be reticent and mincingly grave, and never clothe herself in the glorious dignity of mirth. One has only to see a perfect lady and a perfect gentleman moving through a waltz in their well-bred superior way, and afterwards to look at the beautiful movements of horses or of tigers, to realise how much of the overflowing joy of living the English people have given away for a poor affectation of a temporary sort of good manners. Ah, how I should love to see some self-abandonment in this world of meanly moulded statues and

indifferent masks! Perhaps it is because there is so little of this self-abandonment that men get drunk. They get drunk so as to be able to wave their arms and use the resources of their features without self-consciousness. Only in the public-houses and at their games do the staid kind of the English cast aside the folly of self-restraint, and become as wise as the dogs that jump and the rabbits that scurry.

Meredith has compared a beautiful woman in her movements to a silver birch in the wind, and Shakespeare saw her—a still more exultant comparison—as a wave of the sea. One has to see her in the changeable attitudes of the tennis-player before one can take these similitudes into one's own blood. Last week in Highgate I beheld women playing lawn-tennis, and silver birches and waves were not more pliant or fairer. And the men, were they, too, beautiful? Well, some of them at least had pleasant lights in their eyes, and their arms swung in a certain delight. They were wise enough not to lay aside their pipes while they were playing, and they looked as though their white-shod feet were tingling with joy, a joy that had forgotten the paved walks of cities. One of them, a father of a family, drooping-paunched, and with the gait of a baby elephant in a set of lancers, was past being beautiful. Bearded with darkness, and spectacled, and little-legged, he scuttled hither and thither after

the ball, a Brobdingnagian chasing a butterfly, the most ridiculous and expressive figure of elderly joy that I have seen, as the phrase goes, for many a long day. That he was expressive in the midst of all his grotesque and mad-bull rushes among his children up and down the court is his exceeding great praise. I, I was only a graceless fellow, a figure without eloquence, that looked on. I envied him his broad-beamed ludicrousness, I envied him his suburban joys, and was sad because I had never worked in the City, and so could not let my heart enter fully into them.

Observations on a Funeral.

QUITE recently I had occasion to attend a neighbour's funeral. Judging by the number of persons who strode up in their solemn habits to the house of the dead, I am inclined to think that the common man finds a certain pleasure in doleful ceremonies of this sort. There was something aggressively sad upon the faces of most of those who were present—something exultantly tender and sympathetic; I imagined everybody was vying with his neighbour as to whose eyelids should droop in the most sanctimonious sorrow, or whose cheeks should deck themselves out in the most spectral whiteness. The outside world, indeed, seemed to be indulging in grief as in a luxury. In this matter, the outside world behaved not very differently from those who had been closer to the dead. Friends and relations sat behind drawn blinds, finding a nervous pleasure in the hush of the voices and in the dim suggestive light. They were not aware, I am sure, that they were enjoying themselves as thoroughly as though they had been attending a

a rather eerie kind of play. And yet, just as the drama—all art, in fact—has for its chief function the provision of a method of escape from the distressing facts that surround us, so all this playing at grief—the darkened room, the whispering of persons half seen, the oak coffin, the crape on the knocker, the black and uncomely cob-web brush affairs on the funeral horses, the hearse with the glass sides, and the flower-strewn coffin showing through—may be of some use in diverting the heart of the mourner from its principal sorrows.

We delude a child out of its pain or trouble by filling its imagination with the unreal people of a story—a story of pain and trouble, perhaps, as great as the child's own. In times of mourning we treat ourselves much as we treat sad children. We cannot endure death in the ordinary world: only the very brave can do that. Consequently, we build up an unreal world for the nonce, a world of half-lights and silence, of trailing black gowns and waving black plumes. We luxuriate in the new atmosphere, and our tears flow as easily as though we were listening to the tragical history of Hamlet. We trick ourselves into the belief that we are weeping for the dead; but, in truth, our tears are mere playgoer's tears. They leave, not a broken, but a mended, heart. It is a part of human nature always to shirk a mighty sorrow or a mighty joy by resorting to the effects of the theatre. We are

become afraid of the real joys and sorrows that walk in the light of the sun. As a result, we seek the thrill of religion in a room artificially heated and amid artificial circumstances, and we can endure the anguish of mourning only amid scenic effects and costumes of a theatrical gloom.

We have not the sincerity to meet our sorrow in the light of day. We wrap it in a spectral cloak, and sit happily by its side for hours at a time. There is no use blinking the fact that the half of our grief is pure self-indulgence. There are numbers who have no taste for laughing, but who love always to be moaning over their misfortunes and their dead. There is something about death which appeals to the cheaper theatrical emotions in us. The irony of the fall of the last curtain upon what had so long appeared to be a merry comedy is obvious to us all. We are constantly waiting for such a descent of the curtain, and, when it happens in the case of a neighbour, we blubber our hearts out and feel the better for it. The notices of births and marriages in the papers do not delight us with joy so inevitably as the announcements of deaths exalt our spirits in ecstasies of sorrow. In our news columns we have regard almost exclusively to the pitiful aspect of things. We cherish murders and bankruptcies and burning vessels. I know a very dear lady who, as she passes her eye over a newspaper, sighs and

weeps at every account she discovers of an accident to someone who is still young. Should a boy be drowned, she wonders "how his poor mother is bearing it," and falls lamenting in a way that makes one think her heart is breaking. And yet I am quite certain this is merely my friend's method of enjoying herself. She revels in this kind of emotion just as you or I might revel in a pantomime, or a good dinner, or a football match. She is only acting a part after all; for she is a sentimentalist, and all sentimentalists are actors from the start to the finish.

Indeed, there is no doubt that, just as grief is itself a disease, certain modes of the expression of grief are cures, safety-valves, counter-irritants—whatever you choose to call them. I am sure a gloomy funeral has saved many a heart from breaking. The cheap conventional symbolism, however, repels the artistic man, the man of individuality. He longs to defy the conventions, to follow the hearse in cap-and-bells, to shed his crape-band and wear a fancy waistcoat. Should he do this, however, the world would look upon him as callous, heartless. And yet it would possibly be he who all the time would be bearing the real burden of sorrow. The frantic gestures, the weeping and wailing, the leaping into the open tomb, these are but limelight and fleeting affairs; and the man with the stricken heart observes them all, horrified

at their vulgarity, at their cheap animalism. One of the "Contes Cruels" of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam tells of a great singer who visited the deathbed of the woman he loved. There he found the woman's sister, crying her soul out and lamenting as though the world were at an end. Amid his sorrow he was conscious of a jarring upon his nerves resulting from the faults of "vocal omission" which were apparent in the weeping woman's utterance of her sobs. The critical singer, however, could endure life no longer when his beloved was dead, so he blew his brains out. The woman whom grief had enclosed like a shower, on the other hand, put off her mourning clothes at the end of the period appointed by convention. Had the singer been insincere enough to act the general pantomime of grief, he, too, might have had as happy a recovery. And so it is questionable if we ought to envy him a sincerity bought at so heavy a price. We could scarcely bear the world if it were not for blinds that can be pulled down, deceiving us with a false show. The mourner must be forgiven his appeal to ragged and conventional symbols. He could only break such a convention at the cost of a broken heart. And yet, if we are to look at life bravely, we must dismiss those long black fellows who handle our coffins with so apparent a solemnity. I have seen them returning home, seated inside the hearse, and pulling at their pipes

and laughing where an hour ago the coffin was. This, I think, is a more audacious and befitting comment on life than the long faces they had previously worn.

